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THE INFLUENCE OF EMILE ZOLA ON

FRANKO'S BORYSLAV CYCLE

by



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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the literary impact of Zola's method upon Franko's works. Whenever the problem of their relationship has been dealt with, an incomplete picture has been presented in most cases. The task of this study is to project the viewpoint beyond the critics' feeble attempt, and to demonstrate that the ties existing between Franko's and Zola's literary methods are of a considerable significance. With the aid of a few unbiased critics and Franko's literary works, such task has been made possible. Although Zola's prominence can be felt in many of Franko's writings, this thesis aims at an examination of affinities in two major works in Franko's Boryslav cycle--Boa constrictor and Boryslav smietsia (Boryslav is Laughing)--with two parallel novels of Zola's Rougon-Macquart--L'Assommoir and Germinal. Franko's short-story "Ripnyk" (The Oil Worker), belonging to the Boryslav cycle, is of particular interest in shedding light upon its author's position towards Zola.

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A Note on Transliteration

Apart from the familiar names, spelled in accordance with the Oxford Dictionary, the remaining Slavic names, terms, titles of novels, stories, journals, etc. in this thesis follow the transliteration system of the Library of Congress. Because of technical difficulties, the diacritical marks have been omitted.

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PREFACE

Ivan Franko was writing his Boryslav sketches at a time when naturalism began to be asserted in the west and Zola was emerging as the leader of the new school. During that time, Zola fell into discredit among the Slavic literary public in the Russia and the Ukraine, especially as his articles in Vestnik Evropy (The Messenger of Europe) alienated some major critics by his insistence that the social and physical environment should play a decisive role in shaping human conduct.

During all this time of controversy, Franko retained an enthusiastic attitude toward Zola. He appreciated the great aesthetic value of the Rougon-Macquart, and observed with critical reservations Zola's scientific method. It is no wonder then, that Franko became the target of criticism of those who so vehemently attacked Zola. He attributed their lack of foresight to their incapability to see beyond Zola's experimentalism. For Franko perceived that Zola was not solely an expounder of a theory, but a humanitarian worker whose social role coincided to his own.

In dealing with the question of relationship of Franko toward Zola's naturalism, the critics often approach the problem with a biased attitude. They overlook the importance of the naturalistic tendency in Franko, and dismiss it as a passing phase of his maturity. The Soviet critics such as I. Doroshenko, M. Vozniak, and even

Zhuravska, maintain this position. Or, they altogether fail to recognize Zola's influence and present an incomplete picture of Franko by making him pose strictly as a realist, follower of the classical realism of the Russian writers. Among these critics belong O. I. Biletskyi, M. Bass, O. I. Kyselova, and A. Muzychka only to cite a few.

Moreover, Franko's contemporary critics, as Tsehlynskyi and Ohonovskyi, who recognize the naturalist tendency in him, do not pause to analyze the scientific elements that Franko acquired from Zola, but readily criticize the existence of such elements, and accuse him of depicting the vulgarities of life. Zhuravska's study, Ivan Franko i zarubizhni literatury (Ivan Franko and Foreign Literatures, Kiev, 1961), is of significant value in pointing out the various reactions of the forementioned critics despite the fact that she refrains from passing judgement, and maintains a negative opinion on the significant impact of Zola on Franko's works.

This study aims at giving as complete a picture as possible of the importance of Zola's naturalism in molding Franko's literary development as illustrated in the Boryslav cycle. The studies undertaken on this topic have, so far, been rather limited, and not all were accessible for the present use. In fact, many were scattered in various newspapers and periodicals, and are not at all available in North America, even to specialists on the subject. Aside from Zhuravska's work mentioned above, two other significant sources for this study were Rublevska's "Franko ta Zolia" (Franko and Zola, Chervonyi shliakh [The Red Path], No. 3, 1930) and L. D. Ivanov's "Ivan Franko i svitova literatura" (Ivan Franko and World Literature, Nauchnye

zapiski filologicheskogo fakul'teta [Scientific Transactions of the Faculty of Philology], No. 24, 1940). With the material at our disposition, we have attempted to formulate an impartial conclusion of the extent of Franko's interest in Zola's naturalism.

The shaping of Franko's literary mind towards a realistic and zolaistic trend is the subject of the introductory chapter of this thesis. In this light, we will view the stand that the critics take in acknowledging or repudiating the affinities and the attraction of Franko for Zola. In the second chapter, we will consider the facts and analyze the relationship existing between the principles that Franko formulated and the bulk of theories of Zola. The third, fourth and fifth chapters will be devoted to the application of these theories in the major works of the Boryslav cycle, and in particular to the similarities between Boa constrictor with L'Assommoir, and Boryslav smietsia (Boryslav is laughing) with Germinal.

Since the new unabridged edition of Franko's works promised by the Ukrainian Academy of Arts in Kiev has not yet been released, we were obliged to make use of the existing twenty volume Soviet edition. As Bohdan Kravtsiv remarked in his Ivan Franko pro sotsializm i marksyzm (Ivan Franko on Socialism and Marxism, New York, 1966), the Soviet editors omitted many of Franko's later critical views on political and social issues which would have shed some light on his evolution and final position as a thinker and a social reformer. However, since we are not concerned with the political and social aspect in Franko's works, Kravtsiv's comments and reprints of some of Franko's political opinions have proved to be adequate material

for our purpose.

The translations of Franko's works used in this thesis are also inadequate. Solasko's translation is a mixture of the first and second editions of Boa constrictor, and offers a distorted picture of Franko's intentions. Consequently, these translations have been cited with care, and compared with the original. Whenever inadequate, I have given my own renderings based on Franko's text. All the other translations of the Ukrainian critics on Franko are my own.

CHAPTER I

FRANKO'S "NEW REALISM" AND HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH ZOLA

The question of Franko's acquaintance with Zola's naturalism is important in shedding light on the nature of his aesthetic development from his youthful romantic beginning during his formative years as a critic and novelist, until the end of his life. The lax attitude of the Western critics in this regard is chiefly due to the fact that a cultural and linguistic barrier exists between the East and the West, which is aggravated by an ideological one. Only recently has a step been taken to penetrate the Eastern literary world, but even so, the knowledge of it remains relatively superficial, as it continues to be limited merely to the artistic giants such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov and a few others. It is for this reason that Ivan Franko, the popular Ukrainian author, remains virtually unknown among Western critics.

Among Soviet critics, there is a strong tendency to minimize the naturalistic aspect in Franko's works. In their attempt to exclude as far as possible traces of zolaism in his works, these critics place the emphasis on Franko's relationship with the Russian classical realists of the nineteenth century, and above all with the radical writers of the time: Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov, Pisarev. To this problem, Bohdan Kravtsiv has dedicated a study: Ivan Franko pro sotsializm i marksyzm, dealing with the topic of one-sidedness of the Soviet critics in their endeavour to present only the early phase

of Franko's artistic development, when his political and aesthetic views were not as yet clearly formulated.¹

On the other hand, the tendency of the critics who do venture beyond the early phase of Franko's works is to omit words or whole passages which shed light on his critical approach to Marxist theories and literature, and to a certain extent on his condemnation of some of their principles. The article "Sotsializm i sotsial-demokratyzm" (Socialism and Socio-Democratism), in which Franko clarified his attitude towards the question of socialism is not to be found in Soviet print at all.² Turning his attention to this article, Kravtsiv points out that Franko strongly criticized the idea of "scientific socialism" of Marx and Engels, showing the "unscientifism" and even the absurdity of that term. His idea of socialism is conceived in a much broader sense, the basis of which is the humanistic ideal of brotherhood and equality. At the end of this article, Franko stated that "true socialism, the idea of future brotherhood, will be successful only when the people do away with illusions and erroneous doctrines."³

Furthermore, the Soviet critics fail to reveal passages in

¹Some Soviet critics who uphold this position are: Mykhailo S. Vozniak in the articles "Do sotsialistychnoho svitohliadu Ivana Franka" and "Engels u Frankovomu perekladі," in Narysy pro svitohliad Ivana Franka (Lviv, 1955); Oleksii H. Bilous in Filosofski i suspil'no-politichni pohliady Ivana Franka (Kiev, 1949) and Svitohliad Ivana Franka (Kiev, 1956); A. S. Brahinetz in Filosofski i suspil'no-politichni pohliady Ivana Franka (Lviv, 1956), etc.

²Published in Zhytie i slovo, VI, (1897), pp. 265-92. See Bohdan Kravtsiv, Ivan Franko pro sotsializm i marksyzm (New York: Prolog, 1966), p. 12.

³Quoted by Kravtsiv, p. 12.

which Franko manifests his mistrust of the Marxist economic doctrine because of its detrimental effect upon the masses. Franko argued that the Ukrainian petty landowner's attachment to the land was such that he was not prepared to abandon his property, however small it was, in order to become a factory worker, a proletaire. Not only did Franko believe that these aspects of Marxist theory were not applicable in the Ukraine, but he foresaw that the ideal of Marx and Engels would result in a "great national prison."⁴ The positive aspect of Marxist teachings that Franko himself eagerly acknowledged was the concept of the education of the masses. This was to be his lifelong belief and ardent struggle. He was to become the prophet of the people, the leader of the Kameniari (The Stone-breakers) who were ready to lay down their lives in order to pave the new path to freedom.

The contemporary Soviet criticism of Franko's relation with Zola's naturalism is also negative. On the one hand, there is a denial of any naturalist tendency in Franko, while the probability of Zola's influence as a realist is considered and even recognized; on the other hand, there is a complete rejection of all possibilities of Zola's influence, be it realistic or naturalistic. Thus the preservation in Franko of the image of the revolutionary democrat is being made possible.

The young critic Ivan Doroshenko, the expounder of the latter theory, appears to be the most radical in concluding that in Franko's early period there were no traces of borrowings from the West, whether

⁴Ibid., p. 19.

aesthetic or theoretical. "Therefore, in the seventies," writes Doroshenko, "Franko did not see any aesthetic doctrine, any accepted views on literary criticism, nor any pattern of criticism that he could borrow from the West. Among all the principles and methods of literary criticism known to him, he chose the realistic criticism of the Russian revolutionary democrats."⁵ In the same manner, I. O. Biletskyi demonstrates Franko's dependence on Russian realism, in particular on that of Belinsky, and goes on to show the general importance of Russian literature to the development of Ukrainian literature.⁶ Although he does not deny the role of French naturalism and that of Zola in the literary development of Franko, he casually overlooks it, mentioning only Franko's articles on and translations of Zola.

An entirely opposite attitude is expressed by M. Bernstein, who freely recognizes Zola's importance for Franko, but neglects to elaborate on the specific aspect of Zola in which Franko was interested. "Franko was convinced," Bernstein maintains, "that in the conditions of the Galician literary society of the seventies, the artistic achievement of Zola is able to, and ought to be able to play a progressive role."⁷ Together with many conservative critics who held firmly

⁵Ivan Doroshenko, Ivan Franko literaturnyi krytyk (Lviv: Vydavnytstvo Lvivs'koho Universiteta, 1966), p. 37.

⁶I. O. Biletskyi, I. I. Bass, and O. I. Kyselov, Ivan Franko: zhyttia i tvorchist' (Kiev: Akademiia nauk, 1956), p. 82.

⁷M. D. Bernstein, "Z istorii borot'by Franka za realizm i narodnist' literatury," Tvorchist' Ivana Franka: Zbirnyk statei, ed. IE. P. Koryliuk et al. (Kiev: Akademiia nauk URSR, 1956), p. 90.

to the classical realism of Tolstoy in the East, and of Balzac and Stendhal in the West, these anti-naturalists saw in Zola the continuation of Balzac's tradition. His scientific theories, they argued, were merely a cover up for his description of the unpleasant realities of life, and deserved to be ignored. Since the realistic subject-matter was also pertinent to the Ukrainian literature, Bernstein suggest that Zola's writings should play a definite role in it.

The scientific method in Zola's realism was attributed, by the majority of the Marxist critics, to his bourgeois narrow-mindedness and to the fact that he could not divorce his political prejudices from his art. The element of "bourgeois liberalism" in Zola further compelled the Marxist critics to ignore any artistic rapprochement that may have existed between Franko and Zola. Georg Lukaács, for instance, recognized Zola's artistic talent, but reproached him for having failed in his mission by being too much engrossed in his social class: "Zola is one of those outstanding personalities whose talents and human qualities destined them for the greatest things, but who have been prevented by capitalism from accomplishing their destiny and finding themselves in a truly realistic art."⁸

Another aspect of this controversial issue has preoccupied Franko's contemporary criticism. It is the well known attitude of resentment toward the naturalist literature, based on the assumption that its scientific method and the pessimism and sordidness of its subject-matter may be the ruin of good literature. In the 1880's, at the

⁸Georg Lukaács, Studies in European Realism (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), p. 95.

time when Franko was publishing his articles on Zola, the Ukrainian conservative critics had already adopted an antagonistic attitude toward the naturalist school, and expressed their discontent in the press. Zhuravska comments that "In the reviews of Pravda [The Truth--A.S.] and Zoria [The Star--A.S.], dedicated to the contemporary French literature in which Zola's works were discussed, an evident protest was seeping through against the tendency of the new realism directed towards the uncovering the dark side of life, and in some cases even towards the reorganization of this life."⁹

In most cases, the conservative critics, despite their rejection or condemnation of naturalistic tendencies in literature were convinced of the factual existence of that tendency as a new literary movement. Thus, Mykhailo Podolynskyi rejected Zola's naturalism on the basis that it brought nothing new to the literary field, but was merely a justification for "a rather unpleasant thing."¹⁰ Even among this compatriotes, Zola was accused of pornography, and Daudet termed his work as "le romantisme de l'égoût." The prominent conservative critics Ohonovskyi and Tsehlynskyi expressed a similar attitude of contempt in their condemnation of naturalism. They blamed Franko for transgressing all aesthetic norms by portraying the dark side of life, and this they termed naturalism. For realism, according to Ohonovskyi "ought to reflect life not as it is, but ought to affect the reader according to

⁹I. Zhuravska, Ivan Franko i zarubizhni literatury (Kiev: Akademiia nauk URSR, 1961), p. 204.

¹⁰Quoted by Zhuravska, p. 206.

the rules of 'higher' aesthetics."¹¹ Hence, this portrayal of reality at a higher level cannot occur within a subjective frame of mind as Zola's was, whose political views became incorporated in his artistic world. Tsehlynskyi, in 1887, maintains the same opinion of Franko, stating that his subjectivism stems from depicting the heroes not as they are, but as he wants them to be. He concludes that "we can certainly assert that Zola's school will not be accepted in our society, at least not in that drastic form which is represented by Ivan Franko."¹²

In order to determine objectively to what extent Franko was the representative of the naturalist school, it is necessary to examine his literary career from the beginning. Since Franko's acquaintance with the Russian writers and critics played an important part in his literary development, the Soviet critics seize this opportunity to demonstrate that it was in fact the decisive factor in Franko's career. But another factor of equal importance which manifested itself in a parallel line to Franko's interest of Russian literature, was his enthusiasm for Western literature, and in particular, for realism and naturalism, the literary trends of his time.

Despite the biased views of the Soviet critics who claim that Russian literature was the initial and predominant factor shaping Franko's artistic development, it will be demonstrated that his acquaintance with that literature occurred almost simultaneously with

¹¹Ibid., p. 210.

¹²Ibid., p. 211.

his discovery of Zola. The factor that prevented Franko, in his youthful period, from acquainting himself with either the Russian realists or the French naturalists was due to the backwardness of the established educational system on the one hand, and on the narrow-mindedness of his teachers in Drohobych on the other. The lazy complacency and negligence of the teachers added to the lack of cultural and political activities among the students. Franko recalls that "the teachers who came here . . . soon forgot about all instruction and began to drink . . . often came to class intoxicated, and such was their method of instruction."¹³

It was no wonder then, that before entering University in Lviv in 1875, Franko's knowledge of literature was limited. "In the lower grades I read very little"¹⁴ confesses Franko in his autobiographical letter to Drahomanov. In the higher grades, while he admits reading a mixture of works, there is no indication yet of a serious acquaintance with the Russian classical realists: "In the higher grades, I eagerly began to read all that came across my path: Shakespeare, Schiller, Klopstock, Krasicki, Goethe, Eugène Sue, Kotzebue, Nibelungenlied, Krasinski, Mickiewicz, Slowacki, and others."¹⁵ While in the private library, beside the complete works of Schiller,

¹³Ivan Franko, Tvory v dvadtsiaty tomakh, ed. O. Kornichuk et al. (Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo khudozhnoi literatury, 1955), IV, pp. 24. Henceforth will be quoted as Franko, Tvory.

¹⁴Franko, Tvory, I, p. 13.

¹⁵Ibid.

Klopstock, Shakespeare, I had Auerbach's Neues Leben, and Dickens, a volume of Heine, something from Jean-Paul, Goethe, Victor Hugo, and so on."¹⁶

Therefore upon entering the University, Franko fervently began to read what he felt he had missed in his earlier instruction, as he writes Drahomanov: "From your letters to the editors of Druh [The Friend--A.S.], I gathered that one ought to acquaint oneself with the contemporary writers, and I began to read Zola, Flaubert, Spielhagen, in the same manner as previously I was passionately reading L. Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Pomialovsky, and further Chernyshevsky, Herzen, and so on."¹⁷ This quotation serves a double purpose: it illustrates Franko's present interest in the contemporary Western realists as Drahomanov had suggested in his three letters to Druh (June 1875; December 1875; July 1876), and it shows that before this date, Franko had had the opportunity of studying the Russian authors mentioned above. But his acquaintance with them did not come until after the spring of 1875, the year he entered the University, and before the summer of 1876, the year of Drahomanov's third letter to Druh. From this, it becomes clear that Franko's period of acquaintanceship with the Russian realists roughly coincides with his first reading of Zola and the Western realists. So that if these factors did have any bearing upon Franko's literary career, both sides played an important role.

A third significant factor contributing to the formation of

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

Franko's literary thoughts was his interest in the Russian radical writers: Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov, Pisarev, and the teachings of Marx and Engels. It is evident that Franko's enthusiasm for these writers stemmed from the fact that Western Ukraine was under the oppression of the Austrian regime and the Polish nobility just as Russia was under the Tsarist regime, and that their cries for justice and freedom could be applied equally well to any oppressed nation. Franko's approach to this question was objective. He did not exclude any literary or political trend pertinent to his time: "I already knew," recalls Franko, "about the new literary trends, about realism and naturalism, about the social question and socialism."¹⁸

Even though he devoted much of his time to the translation of the social writings of Chernyshevsky, and Marx and Engels, and included some of these in his Dribna biblioteka (The Little Library), founded by him for the enlightenment of the general public, Franko was never a blind follower of their teachings. He was free from doctrinary entanglement just as he was free from all literary conventions. Being imprisoned for his allegedly active participation in revolutionary groups, he explained: "I was a socialist by sympathizing with the cause, as a muzhik, but I was far from understanding what scientific socialism was all about."¹⁹ His sympathies, in his early life, were towards the revolutionary cause, because in it he found promises for the improvement of

¹⁸Quoted by L. D. Ivanov, "Ivan Franko i svitova literatura," Nauchnye zapyski filologicheskogo fakul'teta, 24 (1940), p. 88.

¹⁹Franko, Tvory, I, p. 15.

the common lot and a brighter future for humanity. Slavutych maintains this argument when he confirms that the Russian influence is to be found on the socio-political side, "not in the manner of writing (Franko was original enough as an author), but in the general struggle against Russian tsarism."²⁰

It is a fact then, that Franko knew Russian literature from the early period of his literary career, and that he retained his interest in it, and even collaborated in the Russian press. Since Polish and German were the official languages of Western Ukraine, Franko also had a natural inclination towards those literatures. He contributed to the Polish press and periodicals many of his own works as well as translations from other literatures, and literary criticism. Apart from these literatures, he looked for inspiration in Italian, English, Spanish, Russian, and various other Slavic literatures. As for Ukrainian literature, he knew almost all of Shevchenko in the lower grades.²¹ Panas Myrnyi's Lykhyi poputav (The Devil's Work) also had a strong impact on his youthful mind, and was perhaps to influence his later work, as A. Muzychka suggests.²² Franko resumes his active literary career in the foreword to the collection Iz lit moei molodosti (From my childhood years), where he says: "During the forty years of my literary career, I underwent various stages of development, I undertook manifold tasks, I followed various tendencies and served other nations,

²⁰Iar Slavutych, Ivan Franko i Rossia (Winnipeg: UVAN, 1959) pp. 15-16.

²¹Franko, Tvory, I, p. 13.

²²A. Muzychka, Shliakhy poetychnoi tvorchosti Ivana Franka (Kharkiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1927), p. 236.

because I had ample opportunity to work in the Polish, German, and Russian languages, besides our own Ukrainian language."²³

It is not justifiable therefore, to say that Franko's literary development was chiefly due to Russian influence, just as it is not correct to take the opposite point of view and suggest that Western influence, in particular Zola's, was the exclusive one. Franko was by no means a slave to any literary convention nor a blind disciple of any particular leader.

Franko placed the interests of the individual and of humanity above everything else, even above his artistic aspirations. In his famous poem Kameniari, the struggle between the poet and the leader of men is evident as a theme. In the end, the poet in Franko is subjugated and the man is left free to fulfill the mission entrusted to him. This illustrates Franko's life very briefly. It is clear then, that Franko could not consecrate his time to the improvement of his artistic abilities, like Flaubert, of whom Franko says: "From this point of view, I consider Flaubert, who spent twenty years over a particular work of art, either an idiot or an egotist."²⁴

Despite these tendencies to subordinate the art, Franko was concerned with improving his style and method of writing whenever circumstances allowed. Even though he did not formulate any well defined aesthetic doctrine, he believed and professed the belief that every true author brought some novelty however small, into his work of art.

²³Quoted by L. D. Ivanov, p. 89.

²⁴Franko, Tvory, XX, p. 79.

For that purpose, he deemed it necessary to differentiate between the good and the bad, and to be careful "not to repeat what others have already forgotten, but to contribute to the treasury of world literature at least a tiny droplet, but a new one, one's own, drawn up from the well of national and individual life, not as yet fully explored."²⁵

The social and political life in Western Ukraine which had yet to be explored and used as a model for a work of art was the contemporary situation under the Austrian empire. Rigid repression existed in both the political and social aspects of life. The language of the elite was German or Polish, as we have seen, while Ukrainian was only fit to be used by peasants. If any political organization existed, it was either a secretive one, or under strict government surveillance. Social and cultural life followed the same path, being subject to strong censorship and occasional purges. In the spring of 1848, a peasants' reform was instigated. They were freed from the feudal-like conditions, only to fall prey to the rising bourgeoisie and capitalist class. Towards the end of the 19th Century, the process of stratification of land was introduced. By selling their land, these petty landowners were stripped of their possessions, and were forced to move to the cities to earn their bread. In Western Ukraine, the regions of Boryslav and Drohobych attracted these people due to their large quantities of oil and ozocerite thereabouts. The miserable working conditions of the proletariat--a factor common to Western Europe--eventually lead to the formation of unions and consequently to organized uprisings

²⁵Quoted by L. D. Ivanov, p. 90.

which ended in suppression.

Franko's sense of protest against these conditions which he was to explore and incorporate into his works, was implanted in him from his early youth. At his father's blacksmith's shop, he often listened to the travellers' accounts, as they were going to or coming from Boryslav. The injustices that he experienced while in school were also a factor, important in itself, which made him protest against all forms of tyranny and prejudices. The inhumane treatment from his teachers in Drohobych "became the first seed of rage, contempt, and continual animosity against all forms of oppression and tyranny."²⁶ When in his letters to the Ukrainian newspaper Druh, Drahomanov further emphasized the need for reform, and urged the youth to react, Franko was overwhelmed with Drahomanov's words, and wrote about him very favourably. "The influence of Drahomanov, a professor in Kiev, was decisive. . . . through his works, and even more through his private correspondance, he attempted to awaken in the Ukrainian youth the spirit of criticism, the desire to work for the interests of the impoverished and neglected people, to instigate in them the love for truth in learning, together with dignity and integrity."²⁷

Being the son of a common worker, Franko identified himself with the land and the nation, and felt that he should share their plight. He was "the son of a peasant, who always stood near to the

²⁶ Franko, Tvory, I, p. 252.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 416.

life of his brothers and kinsmen, in his peasant's caftan."²⁸ He knew that he was destined for a mission, but he was not quite sure how to go about it. "I . . . felt deeply moved," recalls Franko "by these [Drahomanov's--A.S.] words, even though it was not clear to me, how I, who was destined to the studies of classical philology, could possibly arrive at a means of giving my strength to serve the interests of the peasant people."²⁹ Even though he did not know how to approach the question of resolving the peasant's problems, Franko was nevertheless successful in his mission. The knowledge that he amassed while at University was necessary to him as a leader, while his feeling for the people was acquired first of all through direct contact with them, and secondly through the readings of his favorite contemporary authors. Here Zola's works figured prominently.

Before Franko had come to know Zola, the latter had already been accepted and popularized in Russia. Turgenev, in a letter to Zola in 1874, referring to foreign authors read in translation, said that "in Russia, they read only you."³⁰ And in the words of one critic, Grigory Levenson, Zola's works were completely assimilated in the Russian literature.³¹ Franko, reminiscing, places Zola among one

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰E. Paul Gauthier, "Zola's Literary Reputation in Russia Prior to 'L'Assommoir'," French Review, No. 33 (1959-60), p. 37.

³¹Phillip A. Duncan, "The Fortunes of Zola's 'Parizskie Pisma' in Russia," Slavic and East European Journal, Nos. 3-4 (1959-60), p. 109.

of Russia's accepted writers: "His novels . . . were selling in great number in Russia, where the criticism of Belinsky and Dobroliubov had long ago acquired indisputable domination in literature for the realistic trend. It is not surprising, therefore, that Russia was the quickest in acknowledging the talent and the truth of Zola's novels. Neither is it surprising that Zola, from 1875, became as though a half-Russian writer, sending almost every month articles and novels to the monthly Vestnik Evropy.³²

There were two main reasons for Zola's popularity in Russia, the very reasons which attracted Franko as well. First of all, Zola's novels and prefaces indicated that he was developing a new trend in realism. He did not limit himself to depicting character types in typical situations, as the tenets of classical realism demanded. For his characters, he chose individuals of flesh and blood and placed them in fresh situations. In comparing the old realism to the new realism of Zola, Lukačs demonstrated that "in his rejection, as romantic and 'unscientific', of Balzac's bred-in-the-bone dialectic and prophetic fervour . . . Zola substitutes a 'scientific' method in which society is conceived as a harmonious entity and the criticism applied to society formulated as a struggle against the diseases attacking its organic unity."³³

The scientific theory which was so often a target of criticism in Zola was not his own, nor did he find it necessary to adopt it as his own. His first scientific notions came from Taine's Intro-

³²Quoted by Zhuravska, p. 217.

³³Lukačs, p. 86.

roduction à l'histoire de la littérature anglaise. Henri Martineau explains why Zola became the scientific novelist that he was: "Sans ce philosophe, le romancier n'eut point existé, du moins tel qu'il fut. Car c'est lui qui, le premier, conçut le naturalisme comme une perpétuelle application de la critique ou de la science à la littérature. Il en fut le théoricien catégorique, et non seulement du naturalisme, mais encore de toute la littérature à intuitions scientifiques."³⁴

Having received the primary idea from Taine, Zola was set on carrying this scientifism further into the literary field. Claude Bernard's Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale came at the right moment. It furnished the idea as well as the material for Zola's Roman expérimental. Furthermore, he used specific scientific works to derive from them his particular laws. Thus, Dr. Prosper Lucas' L'Hérédité naturelle was the basis for his famous law of heredity, and Dr. Charles Letourneau's Physiologie des passions was used to explain the mechanisms of passions within a character. His new doctrine consisted in a "combinaison du réalisme des Goncourt et celui de Flaubert, avec plus de brutalité; des formules de Taine . . . et notions empruntées aux sciences naturelles,"³⁵ and we may add the positivistic doctrines of Auguste Comte, which had set a new philosophic trend in Europe.

The literary critics of St. Petersburg at first "saw in Zola's scientific theory the basis for a literary reform that would produce

³⁴Henri Martineau, Le Roman scientifique d'Emile Zola (Paris: Baillière, 1907), p. 73.

³⁵Pierre Martino, Le Naturalisme français (Paris: A. Colin, 1923), p. 26.

the true social novel which they still felt did not exist in Russian literature."³⁶ This was the second reason for Zola's acclaim and popularity in Russia. Gauthier explains that among his literary contemporaries "Zola's novels were distinguished from all the others depicting social and political conditions under Napoleon III, for they elaborated in detail a theme closely linked with the perspectives of Russia's economic development: the theme of the bourgeoisie."³⁷ And we may add, in Franko's terminology, the theme of the exploited and the exploiters in the novels of the working classes.

One of the first popularizers of Zola in Russia was Vladimir Chuiko, who in his article "Vtoraia imperia v romane Emiliia Zolia" (The Second Empire in the Novel of Emile Zola [Aug. 1872]) in Vestnik Evropy, gave the public the opportunity to become acquainted with Zola's novels. In the radical magazine Nedelya (The week), it was Peter Boborykin who introduced Zola to the literary public. In his article "Novye priemy frantsuzskoi belletristiki" (New Methods in French fiction [Sept. 1872]), he places Zola higher than Balzac and Flaubert. In 1873, with the third novel of the Rougon-Macquart series, Zola's success in Russia was assured. The novel appeared in six different periodicals while two unabridged Russian editions appeared in book form. The fourth novel, La Conquête de Plassans, was even more successful. "Between 1871 and 1881, a total of 51 separate translations of Zola's fiction appeared in various literary journals of St. Petersburg . . . unequaled in vol-

³⁶Gauthier, p. 37.

³⁷Ibid.

ume by any other foreign writer."³⁸ And Gauthier concluded that "by 1875, Zola's reputation as a novelist in Russia had greatly exceeded whatever prestige he enjoyed in France, where he was better known as a journalist than as a creative writer."³⁹

In France however, Zola encountered many difficulties. The final blow came in December 1872, when he published his article "Le lendemain de la crise" in the Corsaire and the government closed down the Parisian daily. His prose was refused in the capital, and his editor, Lacroix, went bankrupt in 1872, after the publication of La Curée. Turgenev, who was then a member of the Dîners des cinq, offered his assistance. In the summer of 1874, he wrote Stassulevich, editor of the monthly review of St. Petersburg's Vestnik Evropy, to arrange for the publication of the Conquête de Plassans. Stassulevich refused on the grounds that the novel had already appeared in France, and that Russia did not adhere to the rights of the author. He wanted a new novel not yet published in France. Zola agreed, and in January-March 1875, La Faute de l'abbé Mouret began to appear in Vestnik Evropy. It was the first time that a novel appeared in St. Petersburg before being seen originally by the authors' compatriots. Zola shows his gratitude for being so readily accepted, in the preface to his Roman expérimental:

"Qu'il me soit permis de témoigner publiquement toute ma gratitude à la grande nation qui a bien voulu m'accueillir et m'adopter, au moment où pas un journal à Paris, ne m'acceptait et ne tolérait ma bataille litté-

³⁸Duncan, p. 108.

³⁹Gauthier, p. 40.

raire. La Russie, dans une de mes terribles heures de gêne et de découragement, m'a rendu toute ma foi, toute ma force, en me donnant une tribune et un public, le plus lettré, le plus passionné des publics. C'est ainsi qu'elle m'a fait, en critique, ce que je suis maintenant. Je ne puis en parler sans émotion et je lui en garderai une éternelle reconnaissance."⁴⁰

Zola became the most regular collaborator ever to have contributed to a Russian periodical. He wrote 64 articles, the majority of which dealt with literary topics, though a few commented on political and social life in France. In December 1880, he published his last letter. The interruption of the correspondence brought relief to both sides, as Zola's naturalist and scientific theories had aroused public dissent in Russia, while on the other hand, he came to be more accepted in France.

In the spring of 1875, upon his arrival at Lviv, the stage had been set for Franko's acquaintance with Zola's works. Franko had easy access to Vestnik Evropy, where Zola's Faute de L'abbé Mouret had recently appeared, and where his Lettres de Paris were to be published more or less regularly until 1880. In a letter to Drahomanov in September 1877, Franko refers to Zola's letters, which he would like to publish in Druh: "To the next issue of Druh, it will not be a bad idea to profit from Zola's 'Paris Letter': 'The types of clergy in France', especially from the first part."⁴¹ That he was familiar with Zola's novels shortly after their publication is evident again from

⁴⁰ Emile Zola, "Préface, Le Roman expérimental", Vol. XXXVI of Les Oeuvres complètes de Emile Zola, notes et commentaires de Maurice Le Blond (Paris: Fasquelle, 1927-29), p. 7. Henceforth will be quoted as Le Roman expérimental.

⁴¹ Franko, Tvory, XX, p. 28.

his letters to Drahomanov. Among Zola's novels to be translated for the public, Franko distinguishes those which would best apply to the intelligentsia, as volumes one and six of the Rougon-Macquart, and as for volumes three, four, and five, "even our peasant will understand them," says Franko "especially those passages which describe so accurately the life of the clergy in the countryside."⁴² And then he confesses that he did not yet read the second volume of La Curée.⁴³

Even though Franko strongly refuted some of Zola's scientific theories, as will be discussed in the next chapter, it did not prevent him from admiring the artist in Zola. The scientific approach to realism in art was criticized by Zola's French contemporaries as well, and is still a question of debate today. Even the French author himself, in moments of intensive preoccupation with his characters, transgressed the naturalistic theories he had set up initially. In refuting certain aspects of this theory, Franko only proved to be an independent artist, capable both of originality and of assimilation. The aspects which Franko assimilated into his works were taken from Zola's scientific theory and were applied to his Boryslav sketches as well as to the other works.

⁴²Ibid., p. 22.

⁴³Ibid.

CHAPTER II

LITERARY PRINCIPLES AND THEORIES OF FRANKO AND ZOLA

In the literary principles of Franko and Zola, there is a constant recurrence of the concept that literature is to be modelled on contemporary reality. Taking this concept as the point of departure for his work, Zola formulated his scientific theory, while Franko preferred to remain unspoiled by theories which would restrict him in his vast literary undertaking. Becker's observation that the Russians were not theorists, because "it was their powerful example . . . that determined the course of their own literature"¹ can be extended to other Slavic nations. And the reason that Russian realism, or any other literary genre at the time did not provoke much controversy, was that "there were too many pressing moral and social questions to debate in Russia."²

In his native Ukraine, Franko indeed devoted much of his time to the social issues. He tore himself away from the purely imaginative field, and donned an "ideolohichnyi pantser" (ideological coat of mail).³ Although he was yearning to give in to his artistic de-

¹George Becker, ed., Documents of Modern Literary Realism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 11.

²Ibid.

³Mykola Zerov, "Franko poet," Do dzherel (State College, Pa.: Zhyttia i shkola, 1967), p. 145.

sires, the social responsibilities that he took on did not allow him to do so. The way had not been cleared, as was the case for Zola in France, and Franko recalls that "instead of trodding a well beaten path, I had to blaze a trail."⁴ He placed above all else the well-being and interest of his people, even above his own glory and popular recognition: "the thought was always with me: let my name be forgotten, but let my people prosper and progress!"⁵

Not being a staunch theorist to the extent of Zola, Franko did not formulate his ideas as clearly and systematically as Zola had done in his six volumes: Le Roman expérimental; Les Romanciers naturalistes; Nos auteurs dramatiques; Le Naturalisme au théâtre; Documents littéraires; and Une Campagne. Franko's views and criticisms lay scattered in many prefaces, in various articles, in his correspondence, and can be found in fragmentary form in essays on particular authors, some of which have been collected in the twenty volume edition of his works. There is a short essay however, that sheds light on Franko's literary thoughts, by dealing strictly with the theory of literature. It is the most commonly evoked "Literatura, ii zavdannia, i naivazhnishi tsikhy" (Literature, Its Purpose, and Its Prime Characteristics).⁶ As for Franko's treatment of Zola and his theories, aside from the sources of reference mentioned above, there are several articles devoted to him, as well as reviews of his novels and translations of some of his

⁴Franko, Tvory, I, p. 33.

⁵Ibid., p. 30.

⁶Ibid., XVI, pp. 5-13.

works.⁷

The romantic spirit which was still strongly felt in Western Europe in the 1840's, and found its way to the East in a milder form, did not fail to leave its traces in the writings of Zola and Franko. Before maturing into the staunch realists that they professed themselves to be, both authors underwent a period of youthful romanticism. In speaking of the gulf that existed between Zola's early twenties and his period of realism just a few years later, the critics often quote his famous statement, in which he rejects the commonplace to turn his attention only to the ideal in life: "Je détourne les yeux du fumier pour les porter sur les roses, . . . parce que je préfère les roses, si peu utiles pourtant."⁸ The fumier from which Zola averts his attention, will later be the subject of his novels. The heroes of his youth were the romantics, notably Musset, whose poetry he attempted to imitate in his long poem "Rodolpho." Even as late as 1865, his autobiographical prose work Confession de Claude, suggests Musset's Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle. It is in 1864, with the publication of his Contes à Ninon, that Zola, encouraged by Sainte-Beuve and the publisher Hachette to pursue a career in the field of prose, abandons poetry completely. Even though the spirit of realism has taken possession of Zola, his Rougon-Macquart are marked through and through by poetic description such as Le Paradou in La Faute de

⁷For detailed list, see "Appendix."

⁸Quoted by F. W. J. Hemmings, Emile Zola (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 4.

l'abbé Mouret, the market place in Le Ventre de Paris among the greatest examples.

Franko began his literary career in much the same way as did Zola. Imbued with Hoffman's tales and the reading of Polish romantics, he set out to write poetry under the pseudonym of Dzhedzhalyk. However, his first major prose work, Petrii i Dovbushchuky (1875), already marks the transition between Franko the sentimental romantic and Franko the more sober realist. Franko confirms this change when he says that "my Petrii, which began under the influence of Hoffmann's fantastic tales . . . ended in a different spirit" ⁹

After a year in Lviv, Franko was conscious of a change taking place in him. It was this "new spirit" which marked the end of his career as a romantic writer and poet. And Pavlyk, writing to Draho-
manov, remarked the change when he said of Franko: "That man, who then told me: 'I do not intend to use the commoners' language, to write for them, nor about them' has now reversed his thinking, as evidenced by his articles in Druh." ¹⁰ The critic Zerov attributes this change of outlook to Drahomanov's influence by saying that "It is under Draho-
manov that the artistic ideology of the young Franko took shape. Dra-
homanov turned him away from the cheap romanticism of Petrii i Dovbush-
chuky, toward French naturalism of Zola." ¹¹

⁹Franko, Tvory, I, p. 15.

¹⁰Quoted by S. Shchurat, Rannia tvorchist' Ivana Franka (Kiev: Akademiia nauk URSR, 1956), p. 173.

¹¹Zerov, p. 126.

It seems to be an oversimplification on Zerov's part to attribute this change in Franko solely to Drahomanov, just as it would be an oversimplification to state that Sainte-Beuve was the major force influencing Zola. The change was not as radical as it appears to be. It was due to many factors, historical as well as psychological. "It was an age of scientific determinism and of social illuminism,"¹² Turnell observes, and Franko (as well as Zola) was naturally a product of this age.

While history played an important part in the shaping of the literary minds of the authors concerned, the psychological make-up was also reflected in their works. Grant attributes the change of tone in Zola's letters (and consequently in his life) to his dire poverty, and at the same time, to his disillusioning experience with love. The result of this experience is summed up in a letter to Cézanne in 1861, "written in bed because of the cold," telling him "that he had just graduated from the harsh school of reality, that he is much depressed, and that he now possesses new views on love."¹³

Franko's experiences were no less unpleasant. He encountered many hardships during his first imprisonment in 1877. Little remained of his youthful optimism upon his release. It was indeed a harsh and bitter experience that he underwent, "the first lesson that I learned

¹²M. Turnell, The Art of French Fiction (New York: New Directions, 1950), p. 93.

¹³Elliott M. Grant, Emile Zola (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1966), p. 23.

at the bottom of Galician society"¹⁴ recalls Franko. He was arrested again in 1880, and his experiences at this time were no better because "there I came to be in the higher school at the bottom of society."¹⁵ It can be argued whether these factors are valid in contributing to the literary development of these authors, but the avowed evidence is such that they cannot be ignored nor denied.

As a result of his experiences and the existing political and social circumstances, Franko was far too engrossed in the problems of the day to consecrate himself solely to literary theories. His literary scope extended to many fields and a variety of genres: he was a poet, a prose writer, a critic, a folklorist, a publisher, and a social reformer. Franko says that his participation in the many fields was not due to his financial difficulties, but to "this burning desire to embrace a whole sphere of human interests."¹⁶ But even more important than that was his strong sense of duty and the conviction that hard work was an essential part of life. These became his lifelong guiding principles.

In this respect, Franko's method was at odds with Zola's. For if the latter also saw that man could only be redeemed by working, the nature of his own work differed from Franko's. In order to devote himself more fully to his art, Zola retreated (after the success of L'Assommoir) to his country house at Médan, on the Seine. His carefully

¹⁴Franko, Tvory, I, p. 417.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 31.

planned schedule consisted on working on his novels in the morning, producing three to five pages a day. The afternoon was taken up by journalistic commitments, on which he depended as a source of income, and which he abandoned after his financial position was secured. The evening was spent in conversation with his friends.

Furthermore, it is apparent that Zola conceived the idea of his epic work well before beginning to write his novels. The original plan that he drew up in 1869 was quite detailed. It consisted of ten novels, each of which was to deal with a specific human aspect. The subject-matter was to embrace all walks of French life, ranging from Parisian society to the provincial towns. He was careful not to omit the lowest of the low, the tramps, the beggars, the prostitutes. In his proposition to write two novels a year, he would complete the series in five years. When his first novel appeared in 1871, he added seven more books to his series. In its final form, the series came to twenty novels in all, written over a period of twenty-two years, the last one appearing in 1893.

But for Franko, who wanted to embrace various aspects of human interests, there was no time nor desire to work out a rigid method to follow in his work. He wanted to participate actively in the struggle for human rights and dignity. For instance, he devoted much of his attention to the publication of Dribna biblioteka, a daily to which he intended to give an encyclopedic character for the instruction of all levels of society. His main concern was not to achieve glory and recognition as a writer, but to make his work available to a wide reading public and to produce the desired effect of revealing the prejudices and intolerance toward the lower classes. For "only solidarity with

that poor, simple, but true brother of ours," says Franko, "will protect us from abstractions and doctrinary tendencies, and will lead our national growth along a straight and rightful path."¹⁷

Since circumstances of material hardship and his own desires for reform combined to avert him from giving himself solely to his artistic aspirations, Franko wrote whenever he was compelled to, planning his work on a day to day basis. While Zola's success and his fortune were assured with L'Assommoir, Franko, during his lifetime, did not enjoy such popularity. Very often, his writings provoked a strong reaction from the critics, as was the case with his sketches of Boryslav, which produced a "succès de scandale [Sic]"¹⁸ among the Galician public. At times when no newspaper would accept him because of his radical views, he had to turn to physical labor as a means of subsistence. All these things, coupled with Franko's utilitarian idealism, prevented him from making full use of his enormous talent, and accounted for stylistic inconsistencies found in his work.

But despite all the difficulties which occurred in Franko's life, the Ukrainian author however, managed to formulate a general plan for his Boryslav series. The cycle contains 16 artistic works (13 in prose and 3 in verse), and five essays. To these belongs three sketches which have not yet been published to date. The cycle, in all, comprises 24 works according to Taras Franko.¹⁹ The plan however, was

¹⁷ Franko, Tvory, I, p. 32.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁹ Taras Franko, Pro bat'ka (Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo khudozhnoi literatury, 1964), pp. 26-27.

not realized entirely. The works in prose which we possess and which are generally believed to form the Boryslav cycle are the following nine: "Ripnyk" (The Oil Worker), "Navernenyi hrishnyk" (The Repented Sinner), "Na roboti" (At Work), Boa constrictor, Boryslav smietsia (Boryslav is Laughing), "Poluyka," "Iats Zelepuha," "Zadlia praznyka" (For the Holiday), and "Vivchar" (The Shepherd). To these, Taras Franko sees fit to include the following three: "Hava i Vovkun," "Ivas' Novitnyi," and "Khoma z sertsem i Khoma bez sertsia" (The Kind Khoma and the Heartless Khoma).

Franko labored over these during a period of 34 years, "corrected the language, rewrote them, published and translated them into foreign languages."²⁰ The center of the plan consisted of a trilogy: the first novel was Boa constrictor, which focused around Hryshko's wanderings in search of capital. The second novel, Boryslav smietsia, involved the struggle of the proletariat to gather forces. And thirdly would follow Andrus' Bassarab in which the hero was to stimulate the workers in their efforts to destroy the bondage of capitalism.²¹ The third of these was never written, and the second remained unfinished. As for Boa constrictor, Franko revised and expanded it considerably, as he also did with a short story of the series, "Ripnyk." These two were the works which underwent major changes.

Obviously, these revisions and the evidence given by Taras Franko, testify Franko's desire to improve his work and bring it to a

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., p. 27.

higher artistic level. Even though he blamed Flaubert for spending so much time on a specific work, Franko himself was a perfectionist in so far as he constantly returned to the original work. In their revised form, the above works of Franko acquire more naturalistic elements, or as Taras Franko prefers to say, they drift away from realism. About Boa constrictor's "unsuccessful" ending, and about "Ripnyk," he remarks that "it looks as though, the first edition, written while still fresh in his mind, depicts reality more accurately."²²

What innovation did Zola bring into the literary world that so attracted Franko to him? The similarities in the subject-matter were the initial point of contact with Zola. The depiction of the working classes in L'Assommoir greatly impressed Franko, whose theme for the Boryslav cycle also centered around the workers and their difficulties. He observed that "the 'study' of the lives of the working classes--and Zola's novels are strictly conceived as studies--were until now unheard of in French literature."²³ It was mostly in his manner of portraying these classes, "in their true form, neither idyllic nor romantic,"²⁴ that Zola provoked such controversy. Franko recalls the reaction that L'Assommoir created in Poland: "They [critics in Gazeta Lwowska--A.S.] reproach very much Zola's choice of subject and his objectivism, about which a certain critic 'Bohdan' said that it showed deficiency of per-

²²Ibid.

²³Franko, Tvory, XVIII, p. 466.

²⁴Ibid.

fect style and artistic brush."²⁵ But he himself marvelled at the work and highly praised it.

At the time of reading L'Assommoir, the letter to Drahomanov of February 1877 reveals that Franko's first set of Boryslav sketches appeared in print. This naturally points to the fact that Franko did not borrow the theme of the proletariat from Zola because it was there all around him to be observed and be put in novel form with no further need of additional readings. The fact that Zola was resorting more and more to depict the plight of the common man and the worker only increased Franko's appreciation of his French contemporary. With this appreciation, Franko developed a keen interest for Zola's theories. Even though he found occasions to criticize the discrepancies that existed between Zola's theories and his creative work, it only shows that in his careful examination of the French theoretician, he was able to form his own opinion of him, and not be influenced by the biased outcries of the critics.

In this respect, Franko observes that Zola's picture of the workers' lives in L'Assommoir was taken from a very tattered and in many ways distorted picture of life in the pamphlet "Le Sublime."²⁶ Martineau suggests the same idea of Zola's borrowings, as Franko had done before him. He remarks that "il faut voir aussi tout ce qu'il a pris, mot pour mot, des scènes entières et des milliers d'expressions,

²⁵Ibid., XX, p. 23. In this edition of Franko's works, no further reference is given in the explanatory footnotes as to the critic "Bohdan" whom Franko does not fully name.

²⁶Ibid., XVIII, p. 502.

au 'Sublime' de Denis Poulot, pour la peinture des ouvriers de son 'Assommoir'."²⁷ Franko's depiction of reality, therefore, had much more weight than Zola's, whose second hand material could not always compare with Franko's concrete experiences.

Not all the scientific principles however, that abounded in Zola's theories, were based on specific medical and philosophical borrowings. The theories expounded in the Roman expérimental, even though they may have been adapted from Claude Bernard's Introduction à la médecine expérimentale, contain nevertheless some of Zola's original thoughts. Even before his acquaintance with Bernard, Zola displayed an eager interest in science. In a letter to Valabrègue in the summer of 1864, there is, for the first time, a mention of Taine's theory of race, milieu, moment, as expounded in his Philosophie de l'art. It is believed that Zola also leafed through Taine's Introduction à l'histoire de la littérature anglaise, which appeared in 1863. It is doubtful whether he read Darwin's Origin of the Species which came out in French translation in 1862, but it was then a subject of discussion in French society, and Zola could not have let it go unnoticed.

Zola's various other scientific readings include Dr. Prosper Lucas' Traité philosophique et physiologique de l'hérédité, which came out in 1847. Whether Zola familiarized himself with the book at the time of writing Thérèse Raquin is not known. But Grant suggests that

²⁷Martineau, p. 88.

"he certainly perused the book not much later"²⁸ since he applied the physiological principle of impregnation to his Madeleine Férat. At the beginning of 1868, Zola's review of Charles Letourneau's Physiologie des passions proved that he had read that work previously. Armed with these scientific theories that he had amassed, and the acquaintance of impressionist painters as Pissarro, Renoir, Manet, among others, Zola was well on his way to develop and formulate his own theories.

Zola can rightly claim that in the scientific field Taine's influence played a predominant role: "J'ai subi trois influences, celle de Musset, celle de Flaubert, celle de Taine. C'est vers l'âge de vingt-cinq ans que j'ai lu ce dernier, et, en le lisant, le théoricien, le positiviste qui est en moi s'est développé. Je puis dire que j'ai utilisé dans mes livres sa théorie sur l'hérédité et sur les milieux, que j'ai appliquée dans le roman."²⁹ Zola however, adapted Taine's theory with some reservations, just as he was to do later with Bernard's Traité. And it is for the sake of discovering the truth that the author will go beyond the confines of his subjective nature and borrow ideas from philosophical and scientific sources and piece them together. In his short article on Taine, Zola explains the need to resort to these sources when he says: "Un système philosophique m'a toujours effrayé . . . On se sent le besoin de la vérité, et, comme on ne trouve la vérité entière nulle part, on s'en compose une pour son usage par-

²⁸Grant, Emile Zola, p. 39.

²⁹Martineau, p. 75.

ticulier, formée de morceaux choisis un peu partout."³⁰ And again, in his intimate notes: "prendre avant tout une tendance philosophique non pour l'étaler, mais pour donner une suite à mes livres. La meilleure serait le matérialisme, je veux dire la croyance à des forces sur lesquelles je n'aurai jamais besoin de m'expliquer."³¹ The end product of the work of art will give it the appearance of a truthful, life-like document.

It was not necessary for Franko to supplant his knowledge with the scientific theories of a Lucas or a Letourneau. He found the ready-made theory in its final form in Zola. However, on his part, he also occasionally browsed through works of scientific nature, but it is not apparent that he was influenced by any particular aspect of these works. In November 1882, Franko listed several volumes of scientific interest that he recently acquired, among which some volumes of Darwin, Haeckel's Anthropogenie, Virchow's Patologie der Zelle, one volume of Hermann's physiology, Hellwald's Der vorgeschichtliche Mensch, Gervinus Geschichte des XIX Jahrhunderts, the works of Lenau, and a subscription to Brehm's Tierleben.³² So that while he refused to subject his art to some definite theories, Franko was interested in the new medical and physiological discoveries of his time, and no matter what the critics may say, Franko could not remain aloof from

³⁰Emile Zola, "Mes haines," Vol. XXVI of Les Oeuvres complètes de Emile Zola, notes et commentaires de Maurice Le Blond (Paris: Fasquelle, 1928-29), p. 158. Henceforth will be referred to as Mes haines.

³¹Quoted by Martino, p. 30.

³²Franko, Tvory, XX, p. 170.

the issues of his age, and the questions that concerned Zola could not but concern him as well.

The essence of Franko's literary principles is contained in a short essay written as early as 1878 in Pravda. In "Literature, Its Purpose and Its Prime Characteristics," Franko narrowed down the function of literature to two aims: a scientific one and a social one. In expressing his ideas about the scientific nature of literature, Franko did not elaborate them as fully as Zola had done. Whatever he intended to say, he was brief about it and to the point. The genre that is best suited to represent these aims is the novel, as it best lends itself to the social demands of the time. Zola also realized this when he had made his shift from poetry to the novel. Literature, in the form of the novel, continues Franko in his article, accumulates and describes facts of everyday life, aiming only at truth, not at esthetic norms, and analyzes these facts and makes deductions. Without further burdening his ideas with such theories as Zola borrowed from Claude Bernard, Franko retained the essentials of Zola's theory, by using observation and documentation as the starting point for the novel.

In the preliminary notes expounding the method of his Rougon-Macquart, Zola shows that his method is also a combination of the social and scientific aims, with greater emphasis on the latter: "My work will be less social than scientific . . . a simple exposition of the facts concerning a family, showing the inner mechanism which makes it function."³³ Thus, the family becomes the target of the author's

³³Quoted by Grant, p. 46.

scientific experiment. The idea was conceived by Zola after he had read Lucas' work on heredity, which inevitably lead him to construct the famous genealogical tree of Adelaide Fouque and her descendants. But Zola's series of the Rougon-Macquart is much vaster than it appears to be: by relating the story of a family under the Second Empire, it necessarily engenders the whole society which makes up that Empire. The family, to which Zola returns continually, is but an axle around which revolves the entire class to which those individuals belong. Thus, Zola exploited the idea of the family, and did not restrict himself to a particular geographic region.

The point of departure of Zola's scientific method, as was the case with Franko, was to be "une méthode d'observation basée sur l'expérience même."³⁴ This contained the basis for the naturalist novel, which was nothing but "une expérience véritable que le romancier fait sur l'homme, en s'aidant de l'observation."³⁵ By the process of observation, the experimenting novelist will amass a numerous amount of facts and documents, which would then be ready to be put into a novel form. What is important above all, is "la logique de la déduction."³⁶ Little matters if "le fait générateur soit reconnu comme absolument vrai," because "ce fait sera surtout une hypothèse scientifique, em-

³⁴Quoted by Guy Robert, p. 18.

³⁵Le Roman expérimental, p. 17.

³⁶Emile Zola, "Notes générales sur la nature de l'oeuvre," Vol. V of Les Rougons-Macquart, ed. A. Lanoux and H. Mitterand (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 1742. Henceforth will be referred to as Zola, "Notes générales."

prunté aux traités médicaux."³⁷

In this lies the difference between Franko and Zola, and the contradictions that emerge in Zola's works. Franko could not allow any doubtful methods such as "scientific hypothesis" to creep between literature and reality. Having a definite mission to accomplish in the literary field, he could not afford to break away from the real world to paint his own, imaginary "coin de la création." The truth in Franko is simple, unobstructed by scientific experiments of any kind: "Thousands of esthetic principles were formulated and rejected in the course of centuries . . . the important thing is--life. That is, literature and life must be bound by some strong ties."³⁸ The subject-matter will be taken from events of everyday life, so that the literature of a period will reflect the life, the work, the language, and the thoughts of that period.

The inconsistencies in Zola do not arise from the fact that he decided to ignore the observed reality, but from the assertion that he was above all an artist, and as such, he often subordinated his scientific theories to his artistic aspirations. The idea of the work of art bearing the stamp of its creator is summed up in his famous definition that "une oeuvre est un coin de la création vue à travers un tempérament."³⁹ Zola's tempérament assumed the traits of la passion as he notes in his preliminary notes, in order that his novels be ani-

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Franko, Tvory, XVI, p. 11.

³⁹Mes haines, p. 176.

mated by "un souffle un et fort qui, s'élevant de la première page, emporte le lecteur jusqu'à la dernière."⁴⁰ It is the same Zola who earlier so forcibly proclaimed that truth will be the moving force in his novels: "J'ai dit qu'il y avait un élan vers la liberté et la justice. . . . Mais je crois plutôt à une marche constante vers la vérité."⁴¹

In his efforts to represent reality exactly as it is found in nature, Franko knew, just as well as Zola, that exact representation was not possible. No matter how objective the writer will attempt to be, the end product will always bear the mark of its author. The method of the contemporary novel demands that it be based on truth, explains Franko, "that is, that it depicts reality as it is, or better still, as the poet sees it through the prism of his talent, his habits, and his temperament."⁴² Reality will thus be distorted, because it will be seen through a screen, according to Zola, or many pairs of eyes, as Franko remarks. He goes on to give a clearer definition of the prism, which is "rather a cracked mirror which reflects people and things not exactly faithfully in every detail, even though it stimulates, to a certain extent, natural proportions of these details."⁴³ The affinities with Zola's theory of the écran are obvious. The screen

⁴⁰Zola, "Notes générales," p. 1742.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 1740.

⁴²Franko, Tvory, XVIII, p. 82.

⁴³Ibid., p. 187.

that obscures Zola's reality later becomes the temperament of the artist in the definition of the work of art.

The contradictions that abound in Zola's novels therefore, are not to be discarded on the basis that they obscure "the sound principles and acute perceptions that are also to be found in some of his critical articles,"⁴⁴ as Testa observes. Zola's art contains so much individuality that it is necessary to distinguish separately his theoretical writings from his creative works. Very often, he is so remote from reality that the scientific observer in him ceases to exist. At such moments, while continuing to appreciate Zola's ingenious talent, Franko maintains a reasonable distance, as his own role, he believes, is mainly that of a social reformer. He says that "Zola's talent is marked by individuality through and through, and so severely stamped by its good and bad attributes that it would be of no avail, nor worth one's while to imitate him."⁴⁵

Franko did not develop his principles to include the idea of experimentation, and there is not direct mention of it in his essay. It is implicitly stated however, in his scientific method of collecting facts and making deductions. By collecting facts, Franko did not have in mind only the observed reality, but also the documents humains, which were to be of prime importance in the description of characters, and would give the novel its realistic, true-to-life art-

⁴⁴ Janice Testa, The Novels of Verga and Zola (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1964), p. 78.

⁴⁵ Franko, Tvory, XVIII, p. 501.

istic traits.

In examining some of Ian Kasprovych's new works, Franko compares his method of realistically depicting the peasants to the artificial method of B. Prus. Kasprovych, a peasant's son, "in his works often depicts, with almost a photographic exactness, the people whom he well remembered from his childhood, his peasant neighbors and friends. He does not write about this abstract peasant, that B. Prus depicted in his famous novel Plaçowka [The Outpost--A.S.]; Kasprowicz gives true monographies of peasants belonging to some concrete locality; they are men of flesh and blood, who are still alive today, or who have died recently; that is to say, we have here the full meaning of what Zola calls "documents humains. . . ." ⁴⁶

In thus praising the method of Kasprovych, Franko reveals his eagerness to arrive as close as possible to such a high level of objectivity in the depiction of characters, knowing fully well at the same time that total objectivity, because of the artist's temperament, will never be realized. For his Boryslav cycle, he tells us that he based his characters upon real people, whom he either knew or whom he met in Boryslav. Zola however, even though he firmly believed and advocated the method described, was not as successful as Franko in achieving it. As mentioned previously, Zola was not issued of the milieu of the characters that he portrayed, and for his knowledge of them, he was compelled to resort to methods of research, which often lead him astray, and which he supplanted with his active imagination.

⁴⁶Franko, Tvory, XVIII, p. 187.

Both authors nevertheless believed that the starting point for a novel was observation, and documentation, which supplants observation. Zola was continuing the tradition of the realists who preceded him, and especially that of Balzac, whom he deemed to call "father of naturalism." It was not entirely the newly-acquired scientific knowledge that first compelled him to resort to observation. Before acquainting himself with Bernard, whose ideas he borrowed for his Roman expérimental, Zola had written seven novels of his series, and for three of these--La Fortune des Rougon (1871), La Conquête de Plassans (1874), and La Faute de l'abbé Mouret (1875)-- he made use of his first hand knowledge of Aix-en-Provence, where he spent his youth.

Some critics reproach Zola for inaccuracy in documentation. Sainte-Beuve, for instance, speaking about the passage of the Pont-Neuf in Thérèse Raquin, remarks that the description is fantastique, and that the author is being unfaithful to his principles.⁴⁷ The same criticism applies to the greenhouse in La Curée, the garden in La Faute de l'abbé Mouret, and the market in Le Ventre de Paris.⁴⁸ But Zola does not let us forget, that while observation is the starting point, the freedom of the artist in interpreting his work of art must be complete. Sincerity and talent, observation and temperament, the two were never to be divorced in Zola. "His powers of observation" remarks Levin, "imperfect though they may have been, were ambitious and reso--

⁴⁷Gabriel Vicaire, "L'Esthétique d'Emile Zola," Revue des Deux Mondes (1924), No. 21, p. 824.

⁴⁸Ibid.

lute enough to have shown him the world he needed to see."⁴⁹ And the experience of poverty contributed to his perception of life. His early life "had taught him the fundamental and ineradicable lesson of poverty. The Goncourts would tax him with not having seen nor suffered, but he had been there in the sense that they never were."⁵⁰

Franko's power of observation and experience were acquired in a similar manner. His parents died at an early age, and the youth was left with no protection except that of foster parents. His poverty was a recurrent event in his life, the subject of many anecdotes. Among the early short stories, figure several of Franko's recollections which have become a source and an important document for his Boryslav cycle. Perhaps the best of them is "U kuzni," (At the Blacksmith's) where Franko evokes the workers on their way to, or back from Boryslav, and who stopped at his father's blacksmith shop, not only for services that he rendered, but for a meeting and a resting place, a sort of traveler's inn. In the shop, people turned to conversation with one another: "The neighbors talk about the village news; what was heard in the local meetings, what was seen on the way to Drohobych, what the wandering old beggar related. But most of all, the conversations centered around Boryslav and its oil wells"⁵¹

At that time, Franko was not gathering the facts, nor was he

⁴⁹ Harry Levin, "Zola," The Gates of Horn: A Study of Five French Realists (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1963), p. 311.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Franko, Tvory, I, p. 191.

putting down the information into notes as Zola was accustomed to do. Not at all: to the young boy, these happenings had taken the form of fantastic fairy tales, and he soon incorporated them in his mind, until they became part of his world. "I was listening to these talks as if they were fantastic tales about far-away, magic lands. Boryslav, with its ghostly appearance, its crude jokes and wild jumps of fortune, with its strange industry, strange way of work, and strange people, filled my imagination."⁵²

In the course of his school years, while he was living in the city with a working family, he had occasion to observe more closely the family life of the townspeople of Drohobych and their various trades. Life had provided him with the essentials for his subject-matter, and he did not have to resort to the imagination, nor did he have to borrow the material from literary sources. "Occasional stories of acquaintances, characters found in train wagons, my own reminiscences and observations--all this accumulated, little by little, in the course of years, and turned into longer or shorter stories and sketches."⁵³

From the material gathered through their personal experiences and observation, both authors, Zola and Franko, turned to documentation. Documentation, as distinct from observation by its impersonal method of research, was necessary not only to render the novels more objective, but to give accurate information on various trades, customs, social habits, and so on. It was to be the raw material for

⁵²Ibid., p. 192.

⁵³Ibid., p. 421.

the novel which the author was to group logically. In a letter to Gaston Deschamps, Zola explains the need for documentation, when he writes: "Tout ce qu'on doit me demander, c'est de partir du commun, d'établir solidement le terrain où j'entends me placer; et c'est pourquoi je me documente, puisant aux sources indispensables."⁵⁴

The sources indispensables abounded in Zola, and very often the novelist followed them to the last detail. For instance, for the historical facts in the opening volume of the series, La Fortune des Rougon, he borrowed widely from Eugène Tenot's historical account La Province en décembre 1851, and Noël Blache's Histoire de l'insurrection du Var en décembre 1851. It is also in the latter that he found his material for the tragic love story of the heroes, Silvère and Miette. For L'Assommoir, Le Sublime was a major source, while for Germinal, he was stimulated by L. Simonin's informative and detailed work, La Vie souterraine, ou les mines et les mineurs (1867). Zola relied heavily upon this method of documenting himself, often taking factual information, as exact salaries, conditions of work, economic and social situations to the last detail, and supplanted them with his imagination.

Franko also took, as the starting point for his novels and short stories, the gathering of facts and analyzing them. His observation and experience were practically enough to furnish him with the material necessary. But partly because of Zola's emphasis on the importance of scientific research, and partly as a result of his in-

⁵⁴Quoted by Bornecque and Cogny, Réalisme et naturalisme (Paris: Hachette, 1958), p. 113.

volvement in the scientific age, Franko supplanted his personal experiences with objective facts which he systematically grouped together and made deductions. For instance, he gathered popular songs and folklore material which dealt with the attitude of people toward Boryslav. The old oil worker, O. I. Soliuk, when interviewed about Franko's visits to Boryslav, replied that Franko would never go to a hotel, but a worker's home, where he could best be informed of worker's lives and conditions of work. On one occasion, Soliuk continues, Franko disguised himself as a worker in order to get a first hand knowledge of the mine and the workers' experience.⁵⁵ He praised this method of research in Zola, and approved it whole-heartedly: "In this respect, he [Zola--A.S.] proceeds altogether logically, relying totally on his powerful talent of observation and on his ability to seize only the typical facts, remarking their essence among the numberless details."⁵⁶

Even though he was of peasant stock and nearer to the people than was Zola, Franko expressed the desire of coming even closer. Examples of his association with the working classes were manifold: he visited the working sites and even became a laborer on some occasion; he collaborated in the worker's paper Praca (The Work), and wrote many articles on the social, political, and economic questions of the day.

Franko had a definite aim in mind when he set out to write the "social" history of Boryslav. For, apart from portraying the observed truth, his work would have a social purpose of "pointing out

⁵⁵Taras Franko, p. 41.

⁵⁶Franko, Tvory, XVI, p. 13.

the defects of the social structure, where science cannot always penetrate (in everyday life, in the psychological development of human sufferings and passions), and attempting to provoke the reader's eagerness and desire to remove these wrongs."⁵⁷ The first three sketches of the cycle appeared in 1877 under the heading Boryslav. Sketches of the lives of the people in the foothills. The author included an explanatory preface, where he indicated that "this common title contains a whole series of short stories, novels and sketches, whose aim is to portray accurately the life of the people in the foothill regions of Sambir and Stryi."⁵⁸

Franko's method was to describe "accurately" only that part of these people's lives which dealt mostly with their miserable condition and was best suited for a study of the social order. For that purpose he chose Boryslav, since "no other town in all of Galicia represents a wider field for the study, not so much poetic, but rather social."⁵⁹ When he began his cycle in 1877, there were no indications that Franko wanted to make of his Boryslav a "natural" study in the manner of Zola, that is, to reduce his novel to a series of physiological facts, whereby the author will concentrate his attention on the study of tempéraments instead of caractères, and in which "le vice et la vertu" will be products like "le sucre et le vitriol,"⁶⁰ as was the case with Thérèse

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., I, p. 402.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Emile Zola, Epigraph to Thérèse Raquin, Vol. 1 of Emile Zola, Oeuvres complètes, ed. Henri Mitterand (Paris: Cercle du Livre Precieux, 1962), pp. 514-15.

Raquin. If there was any physiologism in Franko at that time, it was of secondary importance. The social aspect, represented by the milieu, was far superior in Franko's mind, since it affected the people to such an extent that they became powerless in their struggle against it, and were completely subjected to it. Such was the fate of Boryslav, which "became a trap hole in which the happy people of the foothills fell to their doom and perished, and where the strength of the whole nation was being hopelessly wasted."⁶¹

The same could be said about the principle of heredity, despite his later conscious efforts to emphasize it. The family, which was the uniting principle in Zola's Rougon-Macquart, was conceived in a different light in Boryslav. Franko attempted to unify his series as Zola had done through a generation link, but his unity was realized mostly through the town of Boryslav--and not a family--which symbolized the soul of all the people, a single family as it were, clearly divided into two groups of exploiters and exploited.

Zola's family, on the other hand, consisted of "un petit groupe d'êtres" who blossom in society and give birth to ten, twenty individuals. . . . "⁶² In the "Différences entre Balzac et moi," Zola proclaims: "Je ne veux pas peindre la société contemporaine, mais une seule famille, en montrant le jeu de la race modifiée par les milieux."⁶³ Thus, his characters will be determined by the inherent

⁶¹ Franko, Tvory, I, p. 403.

⁶² Quoted from Grant, p. 45

⁶³ Emile Zola, Vol. V of Les Rougons-Macquart, ed. A. Lanoux and H. Mitterand (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 1737.

traits, or by the milieu intra-organique on the one hand, and by the social milieu on the other hand. By seeing only the external and internal influences on the physical and psychological make-up of man, Zola more clearly defines his role as an experimental novelist, and he says: "Mon rôle a été de remettre l'homme à sa place dans la création, comme un produit de la terre, soumis encore à toutes les influences du milieu; et, dans l'homme lui-même, j'ai remis à sa place le cerveau parmi les organes, car je ne crois pas que la pensée soit autre chose qu'une fonction de la matière."⁶⁴

But despite the fact that in his theories, Franko pretended to be only interested by the social milieu and its deterministic effects upon the individual, his later work especially shows traces of zolaistic elements of hereditary characteristics affecting the offsprings in a family. Such was the case with Boa constrictor for instance, where elements of zolaism prevailed particularly in the second revised edition of that novel. The hereditary characteristics are stressed and the intrigue of the novel is greatly simplified and reduced to internal and external influences of the family and of the milieu respectively. But most of all, Zola's influence on Franko is clearly visible in the Ukrainian author's attempt to achieve continuity in his cycle by the appearance of a certain character, or member of his family in successive novels or short stories. His attempt at unification however was not very successful, since often the characters of the previous novels played a secondary role, or were brought in in-

⁶⁴Quoted by Joan-Yvonne Dangelzer, "Le Milieu chez Zola," La Description du milieu dans le roman français de Balzac à Zola (Paris: Presses Modernes, 1938), p. 10.

directly through another character. Besides, only in the major novels, Boa constrictor and Boryslav smietsia, do we find a recurrence of the same members of the family, and not of the following generation.

While Franko's artistic nature was independently inclined in such a way that he was well equipped to follow his own path, his practical mind and social preoccupations suggested him to turn to other literatures in order to widen his scope and perhaps find a possible solution to the problems of his nation. Franko, like Zola, believed that an author must bring into his work his own individuality, through his style and temperament. But at the same time, Franko maintained that a good artist should draw ideas from other writers and assimilate them to his own work, "because something completely new, completely cut off from the world of his own impressions, a man can not and will not be able to create."⁶⁵

Franko found in Zola much more than just a prominent figure in French literature. While he disapproved of the deductive method to be applied in a work of art, the essence of his ideas about the nature of literature, based on observed reality, coincided with Zola's. In the method of observation and deduction of facts, Franko believed that the novelist could demonstrate its causes and consequences, and group them in such a way that the reader would come to his own deduction, and proceed to correct the evils of society.⁶⁶ It is obvious that these ideas merge with Zola's in the Roman expérimental, when Zola says: "nous

⁶⁵Franko, Tvory, XVI, p. 12.

⁶⁶Ibid.

montrons le mécanisme de l'utile et du nuisible, nous dégageons le déterminisme des phénomènes humains et sociaux, pour qu'on puisse un jour dominer et diriger ces phénomènes. En un mot, nous travaillons avec tout le siècle à la grande oeuvre qui est la conquête de la nature, la puissance de l'homme décuplée."⁶⁷ Franko never lost sight of the social aim in literature. As for Zola, the consciousness of the social purpose was stirred in L'Assommoir, and reached its highest peak with Germinal. At the same time, Zola resorted to a lesser extent to the experimental method in these two novels, thereby achieving stronger affinities with Franko. In order to demonstrate these affinities we will make use of Franko's major works, Boa constrictor and Boryslav smietsia, and compare them with Zola's Assommoir and Germinal respectively.

⁶⁷Le Roman expérimental, p. 32.

CHAPTER III

L'ASSOMMOIR AND BOA CONSTRICTOR

At the time of the appearance of Zola's first novel of the working classes in January 1877, Franko was already engaged in writing his Boryslav cycle. While the general heading Boryslav. Sketches of the Lives of the People in the Foothills is rather wide in scope and gives the impression that the reader is about to probe into various aspects of social life, the contents soon reveal that through the recurrence of the subject-matter, Franko's aim is to portray one particular aspect of Boryslav: the life and struggle of the industrial workers against the oppressing forces that are exploiting them. For anyone acquainted with Boryslav's history, Franko's aim resumed in the title becomes self-explanatory. But as the author himself observes in the preface to his cycle, outside of its own region and in the West, Boryslav is but a mere name, and bears no particular significance. Therefore, Franko introduces his Boryslav by means of an explanatory preface, where he explicitly states his intentions for undertaking this task.

Because of discoveries of oil and paraffin wax, Boryslav soon became a booming economic center, a "Galician California" as Franko stated himself, the California that Frank Norris wrote about in his several novels. In his article entitled "Deshcho pro Boryslav"¹

¹Franko, Tvory, V, pp. 473-480.

(A Few Facts on Boryslav), Franko proceeds to relate the sudden transformation of Boryslav, from the insignificant village that it was in the 1850's (with a Ukrainian population of 520), to a bustling industrial center thirty years later (of approximately 10,000 inhabitants, and in addition, two to five thousand transient workers).² The characteristics common to both Boryslav and California were not only on the level of rapid economic growth and expansion. Accompanying this growth was the desire for adventurous individuals to enrich themselves. The Galician city attracted many entrepreneurs and fortune seekers:

"Slippery and go-getting elements penetrated into every nook and cranny, like water at flood-time, they swarmed like thousands of maggots, worming their way into every place they were least expected."³ In this feverish rush for money, confusion and violence became the order of the day, replacing all morality and social code of ethics. Often, the peasant who left his land to earn quick money to improve his property, met with disillusionment, if not tragedy.

It is no wonder then, that Boryslav, rather than any other Galician city, was best suited for "a social study." The theme around which the series was to revolve is that of the expanding oil industry, and its effects upon the workers and peasants. It is evident that Franko's sympathies rested with the latter, underprivileged group. He constantly speaks of the need to depict the workers when he says that

²Ibid., p. 477.

³Ivan Franko, Boa Constrictor, trans. Fainna Solasko (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, n.d.), p. 240. Henceforth, wherever this translation will be used, it will be referred to as Solasko, Boa Constrictor.

"while working on the series of the 'Boryslav stories,' I felt that the idea of portraying the conditions of the Boryslav workers and profiteers in the form of short stories was widening" ⁴

If one takes into consideration the nine literary pieces comprising the Boryslav cycle, Franko's series is much more limited from the thematic point of view than is Zola's. While Zola's cycle engenders all the strata of the society under the Second Empire, Franko's world consists of a single class: the proletariat, and its opposing forces--the rising capitalist class. Franko's social aim of presenting the oppressed so that public opinion may be aroused and that further action may ensue was thus made possible. The social purpose underlying Franko's works on Boryslav finally made its way into Zola's cycle and reached its height in Germinal, the thirteenth novel of the series. In L'Assommoir, the first novel of the working classes, the tendentiousness is concealed, since Zola does not make it a point to preach a moral lesson. But the work is full of compassion and humanity, and has many points in common with Franko's Boa constrictor.

Together with the many zolaesque elements to be found in Boa constrictor, there is, above all a parallel of plot structure between it and L'Assommoir. Testa remarks that in L'Assommoir and in Verga's Mastro-don Gesualdo, the plot follows the most common and basic dramatic structures: the rise and fall of the central character. ⁵ This similarity in plot structure applies to the revised version of Boa

⁴Franko, Tvory, IV, pp. 517-518.

⁵Testa, p. 156.

constrictor, where Franko describes Herman's life from the beginning to its dramatic end, as Zola has done with Gervaise, when he said that L'Assommoir was to be the simple life of Gervaise Macquart, with her ambitions and desires.⁶ There are three basic parallel movements around which the plots of L'Assommoir and Boa constrictor revolve: the early phase in the protagonists' lives; the realization of their ambition; their gradual deterioration (in the case of Gervaise) and destruction (in Herman's case).

The first pivotal point of Zola's and Franko's novels which contributes to the material success, and by the same token, triggers the eventual downfall of Gervaise and Herman is their respective marriage to Coupeau and to Ryfka. The overall picture of Gervaise's marriage to Coupeau gives the impression of a happy event, but there are several unpleasant incidents which cast a dark shadow of foreboding on what is to come. From the beginning of the wedding ceremony, things do not go right. The wedding party arrives too early to the City Hall, and when the mayor appears, he leaves them waiting to attend to three other bourgeois marriages while they look on. When their turn finally arrives, the mayor hastily passes over the formalities. The couple experiences a feeling of being cheated out of the ceremony, a feeling which foreshadows their being cheated out of life. The ceremony at the Church proves to be equally unrewarding. They are rudely reprimanded for coming late to the house of God. Their uneasiness is in-

⁶Quoted by Henri Massis, Comment Emile Zola composait ses romans (Paris: Charpentier, 1906), p. 107.

tensified by the haggard and disgruntled attitude of the priest and his untidy assistant. He performs the ceremony hurriedly, amid the general hustle and bustle of the cleaning people, who are preparing the Church for a more important event. The miserly Lorilleux, the only relatives accompanying the wedding feast--aside from mother Coupeau--do not improve the situation. Aunt Lorilleux, green with envy at the prospective happiness of the new couple, does the utmost to vex them, and spoil the general festive mood of the whole group. She constantly refers to Gervaise's unhappy past, viciously calling her la banban because of her limping gait. The only welcome comes from the drunken Père Bazouge--whose practise is to take away the deceased bodies of the poor who lack the means to procure for themselves a decent burial. He predicts the end by saying: "Ça ne vous empêchera pas d'y passer, ma petite . . . Vous serez peut-être bien contente d'y passer, un jour . . . Oui, j'en connais des femmes, qui diraient merci, si on les emportait."⁷

In the first edition of Boa constrictor, while the events leading up to the marriage episode, and the circumstances of the wedding differ greatly from the second edition, the same stifling, business-like atmosphere prevails. In contrast with Zola, who deals lengthily and exhaustively with the marriage ceremony and festivities, Fränko quickly comes to the conclusion of the marriage, thus conveying the idea that love was totally absent and that the union would bring

⁷Emile Zola, "L'Assommoir," Vol. III of the Oeuvres complètes, ed. Henri Mitterand (Paris: Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1967), p. 672. Henceforth will be referred to as L'Assommoir.

no good results. Like Gervaise, who, not being sure whether it was the right for her to do, gave in to Coupeau's promises with the hope of being happy, so did Herman, with Moyshe's advise, agree to the union with the idea that Ryfka's dowry would bring him financial security, the only material happiness which he thought would be sufficient. To Moyshe's suggestion to marry, Herman answers "but I never thought of it," and Franko concludes: "Thus, Herman's marriage to Ryfka was signed,"⁸ and no more was said about it.

The difference in the method of construction between the first and second edition of Boa constrictor rests in the fact that the events leading to the marriage episode of the second edition are presented in a more subtle, indirect manner than in the first. In the first edition, all the facts are given and developed logically, step by step for the reader, so that at times, it gives the impression that the novel, in its oversimplified state, lacks artistic talent. In the middle of the second chapter, when Herman walks the streets aimlessly, thinking of the opportunity he has just missed because of the refusal of a loan, he meets Ryfka by chance. The girl, who happens to be an orphan like Herman, has managed to save a bit of money, and is promised a dowry from a childless aunt. Herman jumps at the opportunity the next day, asking her aunt permission to marry the girl, and in a matter of two weeks, the marriage is concluded.

The revised edition of Boa constrictor does not follow the

⁸Ivan Franko, "Boa constrictor," 2nd ed., Vol. VIII of Ivan Franko: tvory v dvadtsiaty tomakh (Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo khudozhnoi literatury, 1952), p. 390. Henceforth will be referred to as Franko, Boa constrictor.

obvious pattern of presentation of the previous edition. Here, an additional minor character is added, and a new episode is created in order to tie the events in such a way that the reader may himself be given an opportunity of guessing what is to happen next. The new character, Mendel, is attacked by a group of peasants who seek revenge, and Herman comes to his rescue. The injured Mendel is transported to his home, where his wife and daughter await him. Here, we have a hint at a link with the forthcoming marriage scene, but Franko does not enlarge upon it. Herman simply offers to take over Mendel's business, and the daughter is forgotten. All through summer and fall, Herman goes about the business, until the time when Moyshe approaches him and tells him straightforwardly to marry Ryfka.

Some critics (like Taras Franko), maintain that the author departed from reality in the second edition of Boa constrictor. Contrarily to what the above critic believes, Franko renders an accurate picture of the times in which the story takes place. Marriage in those times was usually concluded from the point of view of practicality, and was not resulting from a prolonged romance, at least not among the common people. In this case, the protagonist is an ambitious Jew, who is only interested in getting ahead in society. It would be against his nature to waste time looking for a bride. Besides, Ryfka's marriage would be advantageous to him from a financial point of view, and all concerned were in favor of the union. The wedding feast is absent from the narration, firstly, as it would interfere with the rapid rhythm of the novel, and secondly, as it would unnecessarily complicate the plot.

The second edition of Boa constrictor is built along the same basic plot line until up to the end. That is, the aspirations of the central character, his gradual upward rise, his marriage, the realization of his ambitions, follow in a parallel path. But it comes much closer to Zola's L'Assommoir in so far as the ending--the fall or destruction of the protagonist--is concerned, and at the same time, it acquires more naturalistic and zolaesque elements. It becomes apparent that the revised edition of Franko's Boa constrictor is built upon a more solid realistic base, and its affinities with L'Assommoir are easily observed. For from the marriage episode, it is with the main character and the fulfillment of his ambitions that the author is concerned, and any additional secondary plot, as for instance, in the first edition, the story of Ivan Pivtorak, his tragic death, and the fate of his widow, detracts attention from the central character. Moreover, in the first edition, Herman's charitable gesture to Pivtorak's widow, and his desire to better himself, come as a melodramatic surprise, and therefore the novel is not a truthfully convincing work of art. The death of the characters, Gervaise, and Herman in the second edition, as treated by both authors, gives a sense of completeness and logical outcome, devoid of sentimentality, but not of drama.

The next pivotal point in L'Assommoir as well as in Boa constrictor is the attainment of the goal that the protagonists were dreaming of. In both cases, it is a slow process upward, interrupted by accidents of sorts, and enhanced by the birth of a child who, while growing up, adds more poignancy to the inner conflict of the protagonist. In both novels, the children, Nana Coupeau and Gotlieb Gold-

kramer, are not meant to contribute to the development of the plot itself. In fact, relatively little attention is attributed to them. Besides the above-mentioned purpose that they fulfill, they are used to indicate the passage of time that elapses between the protagonists' upward rise to the climax and their subsequent death.

But the introduction of Gotlieb in Franko's Boa constrictor points to the author's intention of demonstrating, in the manner of Zola, the importance of heredity in the life of the individual on one hand, and the desire to form a connecting link with the next novel on the other hand. Gotlieb's hereditary characteristics, even though already present in the first edition of Boa constrictor, are made much more obvious in the second, that is to say, Franko deliberately portrays Ryfka, his mother, before her marriage to Herman in such a way as to think that she shows traces of some mental illness, while in the earlier edition, nothing is known about her before she becomes Herman's wife. In the revised edition, Ryfka is depicted as a young girl, in her parents' home. One significant feature that we learn about her, is that she is very quiet, to the point of not being noticed. She even gives the impression of being moody. Shortly after their marriage, and before Gotlieb's birth, Ryfka "was silent, motionless, and only her large, black eyes, were staring somewhere in the distance, as if she were an imprisoned bird, shut up in a cage."⁹ She was characterized by a "yearning for something far reaching and unattainable"¹⁰,

⁹Franko, Boa constrictor, p. 391.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 391.

and often fell into an apathy.

Franko informs us that her son's birth was a very painful one and only through the greatest medical care could the mother and son be saved from death. It is not surprising, therefore, that traces of insanity were the logical outcome of this: at several instances, Ryfka even attempted to devour her son. As time wore on, her state did not improve, and she passed on these characteristics to her son. The little Duvid (Gotlieb's nick-name), "from his very infancy was of a strange, sickly nature."¹¹ He was subject to nervous fits, similar to epilepsy, which slowed down his mental development. He displayed a strange enjoyment at torturing animals and people, and looked with awe on human suffering and agony. This trait was not unlike some uncontrollable passions in Zola's characters, for instance, in La Bête humaine Jacques' desire to spill human blood, for its own sake. In the second edition of Boa constrictor, Gotlieb is no longer the stupid, lazy and idiotic individual of the first edition, who only craved for money, to the extent that he was ready to kill his father. His abnormality now made of him a man haunted by a powerful non-material passion, the need to inflict suffering upon man in order to see him suffer, and to feel that he was the source, or the creator as it were, of that suffering. He even confided to his father that he was pursued by the desire to perform some monstrous, unlawful deed. He no longer had any use for money, and he refused it. He was more intellectually inclined, reading such authors as Eugène Sue, and other romantics, and

¹¹Ibid., p. 394.

such criminological novels as Rinaldo Rinaldini. The only horrible deed that he achieved in performing in Boa constrictor was to provoke an explosion in an oil well, a firework, as he called it; and upon seeing the burned bodies of the workers, he "began to laugh hysterically."¹² That is the last we see of Gotlieb. In a similar fashion, Nana, Gervaise's daughter, who after running away from home and prostituting herself, is abandoned by Zola in L'Assommoir. Nana, however, returns in the novel by that name, while Gotlieb reappears in Boryslav smietsia, but then again, he is left in an incompleated stage of characterization, since the novel itself was not finished.

In his novel of the simple life of Gervaise Macquart, Zola is less concerned about the influence of heredity on an individual than in the other novels of the series, as for instance, in La Bête humaine, where Jacques Lantier represented the hereditary criminal. In L'Assommoir, considered by many to be his best novel, Zola tends to overlook the theories of the experimental novelist, and achieves greater aesthetic qualities. The central idea of the novel will be the study of the milieu "sur une femme ni bonne ni mauvaise, qui a déjà eu de tristes exemples sous les yeux, mais prête par sa nature à réagir et à travailler"¹³ Zola does not use Gervaise solely for the purpose of experimentation by showing the effect of the Parisian working milieu upon her. He endows her with life and feeling and a will to resist and fight back. Therefore, she, as well as Coupeau, are not entirely the

¹²Ibid., p. 406.

¹³Massis, p. 122.

product of the milieu in which they live, but also of their temperament and the unanticipated accidents provoked by fate.

Franko recognized these various external forces working against the individual, when in his article on L'Assommoir, he said that the degeneration of the family is not to be attributed solely to alcoholism and laziness, but to remoter causes, to be found in the deeper roots of society.¹⁴ In other words, the environment and the circumstances in which the individuals find themselves are greatly responsible for their make-up.

But while in his criticism Franko especially stressed the external influences of the environment upon the character's development, in his novels he did not exclude temperament and heredity as a factor shaping the individual. And he made use of these elements in his own cycle, as early as 1877, when he began his first edition of Boa constrictor. It is apparent in Gotlieb's character, who inherits his mother's traits of idiocy, and in the second edition, he retains those and acquires in addition his father's despotic desire for superiority which are developed in him to an extreme. Unfortunately, the father's character is not developed to a great extent, as Franko is more concerned about Herman's material ambitions which bring about his ultimate ruin, and tends to neglect the psychological make-up of that personage.

The circumstances in which Herman found himself were responsible not only for his failure in the end, but before that, for the fulfillment of his ambitions. On such occasions, in describing the background or dealing with couleur locale, Franko departs from Zola and ma-

¹⁴Franko, Tvory, XVIII, pp. 466-468.

nifests his own originality. The circumstances, or the background for the novel, are the rich oil region of Boryslav. Any person with a certain amount of wealth imagination and intelligence, could step into the picture and capitalize on the situation. Herman happened to be such a person, and the odds were on his side. The opportunity was far more favorable for him than it was for Gervaise, who lived in the slum quarters of Paris, a city which was already overpopulated, and which offered little, if no opportunity for the average person. It is the respective background of both characters therefore, which is responsible here for their belonging to different classes, once their goal has been reached.

The desires and ambitions of Gervaise and Herman rest not only in the attainment of concrete material goals, but mingled with them is their common wish for happiness and domestic peace. Gervaise expresses this wish directly to Coupeau, when he was courting her, towards the beginning of the novel: "Mon idéal, ce serait de travailler tranquille, de manger toujours du pain, d'avoir un trou un peu propre pour dormir . . . de mourir dans son lit" ¹⁵ This modest demand that Gervaise makes seems to be granted to her at first, after her marriage to Coupeau. Thus, the line of development follows a steady rise, even after Coupeau's fall and his convalescence. Ambitious and hard-working as she is, she even dares to exceed her modest way of living by establishing herself as a patronne of a laundry shop. Even then, she keeps a steady pace, working herself out as her husband indulges in perpetual

¹⁵ L'Assommoir, p. 630.

drinking at l'assommoir du père Colombe. The pace of the novel is halted at that moment as Zola shows Gervaise in her glory, the envy of the neighborhood.

The upwards rise of Boa constrictor coincides with Herman's progression through the years. The reader follows the stages of development through the protagonist himself, as he sits in his office at the height of his career, and reminisces all the important episodes of his life. Thus, from the beginning of the novel until chapter three inclusive (the novel contains five chapters in all), that is, through a period of approximately twenty-five years, Franko uses the flashback technique to show Herman's accession to his present state, millionaire and owner of Boryslav's oil mines. This method of presentation contrasts with Zola's, who starts out from a certain point of the heroine's life, and follows it in a direct line until the climax, telling the events from day to day as they happen, in their order of development. If he does make his heroine recollect her past, it is to make the direct contrast of her climb and descent more effective, thus emphasizing the misery of her condition. For instance, after Gervaise's good fortune is ended, when she has moved to the attic, and she sees herself in the visitor who comes to view the house, her thoughts go back to the happy days, when she had the prospects of moving into the house, and setting up a laundry shop.

But the use of the flashback method by Franko in Boa constrictor is not without positive results. It gives the reader the opportunity to probe into the character's mind, and thus establish the connections between the protagonist and his environment. Herman's points in com-

mon with Gervaise are his great ambition for material success, and his desire to be happy at the same time. However, he soon realizes that the two are incompatible, and he sacrifices his happiness for his material gains and social position. Herman's unhappiness springs from his marriage to Ryfka, which seems to be partly the cause for his social failure, as we have seen. He manifests his present forlorn condition by recollecting the happy care-free life with Itsik, the collector of rags, and his wanderings with him, when "down deep in his heart he knew that those were the happiest days of his life, and that the peaceful, blissful days of poverty with Itsik would never return."¹⁶ And thinking of the struggle he had to put up to attain this state, he exclaims: "So, this is--happiness. This is wealth."¹⁷ The inadequacy of family life compels Herman to turn completely to his business, to be away from home for months on end. Ryfka's role in his life corresponds to that of Coupeau in Gervaise's--they are the cause of the protagonist's moral deterioration; and similarly, Nana and Gottlieb perform the function of adding to the overall misery of the parents' condition.

Having consecrated the first three chapters to the description of Herman's rise to the highest social status, Franko halts the upward climb in the fourth chapter in order to add an incident with Herman's son. When we arrive at the fifth chapter, a period of ten years has elapsed. Contrary to Zola's method of telling almost in a diary-like

¹⁶Solasko, Boa Constrictor, p. 216.

¹⁷Franko, Boa constrictor, p. 381.

fashion the life of his characters, Franko does not let us know what has happened in the course of these ten years. But we are under the impression that since Herman's fortunes are again on the increase--a new discovery of paraffin wax has just been made--the happiness that he was searching for has evaded him. Franko confirms this when he says that "she [fortune--A.S.] constantly was showering him with every kind of material goods from her magic horn, but with her other hand, she was taking away from him the satisfaction, the capability of enjoying his acquired wealth, she was completely poisoning his business interests and speculator's triumphs" ¹⁸ From the protagonist's monologue, and the author's narration, we can conclude that as Herman was progressing up the social scale, his happiness was constantly decreasing, and that the only truly happy days he experienced were in the times of poverty.

In Herman's character in Boa constrictor, Franko wanted to show the ravages of greed and extreme wealth on the physical, moral, and spiritual levels of the individual. In the first edition, he showed indulgence towards Herman by making him aware of the extent of damage to his person, and in a moment of complete lucidity and sincerity, he made him repent his past injustices. In his conclusion, Franko was preaching that an individual must find a new road to humanism and progress. In the second edition however, the author breaks away from the idealistic presentation of what the character should be, and adopts the realistic portrayal of what he actually is. The element of greed for

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 381-82.

material wealth that was taking possession of Herman in the first edition occurs again in the second, with the difference that it is much stronger and contributes to the physical and moral destruction of the individual. Thus, Herman's fate parallels that of Gervaise, who is also destroyed by the forces of the environment, by which the individual is so strongly determined, according to Franko and Zola.

The element of destruction of the central character in the second edition of Boa constrictor is the major change which the author inflicts upon the protagonist. By that token, it becomes the major change of the entire novel, since Franko, in the true naturalist fashion, reduced the plot to its simplest structure, by doing away with secondary characters who formed the sub-plot, and who were not essential to the construction of the plot. Such was the fate of Ivan Pivtorak, his wife and Matii, for instance, who no longer figured in the second edition. By focussing attention on the central figure, the revised novel then becomes the story of "a life," Herman's life, just as L'Assommoir was to be the story of Gervaise's simple life.

In his preparatory notes on the characters, Zola calls Gervaise "Une nature moyenne qui pourrait faire une excellente femme, selon le milieu."¹⁹ Gervaise then, is a typical working-class woman, who, through various circumstances, finds herself in a Parisian quarter at the time the novel begins. The novel will be "L'étude du milieu sur une femme ni bonne ni mauvaise."²⁰ In other words, since the environment is an

¹⁹Quoted by Massis, p. 122.

²⁰Ibid.

evil one, Gervaise becomes the victim of that environment, since she is the product of it. In commenting on the deterministic forces of the environment Dangelzer remarks that "le déterminisme . . . agit plus fortement sur le peuple que sur n'importe quelle autre classe, si nous entendons par déterminisme les conditions du métier."²¹ So that in L'Assommoir, the characters will be determined by the conditions of their trade, which, in Paris, result in " . . . la saoulerie, la débâcle de la famille, les coups, l'acceptation de toutes hontes et de toutes les misères" ²² Thus, Gervaise followed through all the stages of the degradation; from the beginning of her loss of respectability, when she let herself go with Coupeau, in her laundry-shop, through a drinking period, until the end when she prostituted herself in order to get a bite to eat. The end was inevitable: she died miserably and ironically in the shabby little room where Père Bru--the beggar whom she fed at one time--had lived and died.

It is in the second edition of Boa constrictor that, similarly to Gervaise, Herman is strongly determined by the environment in which he is placed. Contrarily to the earlier edition, in which everything was the outcome of fate or chance, as for instance, Herman's meeting with Ryfka, his being lead to Ivan Pivtorak's widow, among other such incidents, Herman's life follows a certain course, the course of a typical middle class businessman, who is placed in a land full of op-

²¹Joan-Yvonne Dangelzer, La Description du milieu dans le roman français de Balzac à Zola (Paris: Presses Modernes, 1938), p. 220.

²²Jacqueline Chambron, "Réalisme et épopée chez Zola," La Pensée, 44 (1952), p. 123.

portunities, who capitalizes on the situation, and does not stop until he has exhausted all the possibilities. Franko clearly emphasizes the influence of the environment upon the individual, when speaking of Herman's first steps into the oil business, he says: "This was the first lesson of the oil business which Herman obtained, and from this moment on, his fate was sealed."²³ That is to say, that just as in L'Assommoir, the conditions of the trade affected the character directly.

Herman's business required much time, which he spent away from home. The nature of the work and his own temperament combined, made of him a shrewd operator, who constantly attempted to suppress all competition, by outsmarting and cheating others, even his own kind. This made of him a heartless individual, oblivious of everything else around him, whose sole ambition was to make more money which he did not even enjoy. His family life no longer mattered. His greed killed all his feelings for humanity, and exceeded everything, even his common sense. He became prey to his rival's wrath, who trapped him into his scheme, by creating an explosion in which Herman was killed instantly. Itsko (the rival), after having had the satisfaction of seeing Herman die, is killed in turn by the explosion he has himself provoked.

This conflict with Itsko, and the accident, are the subject of the fifth chapter. The balance between Herman's rise to fame and his decline is not as symmetrically portrayed as is Gervaise's life. Although Herman does not suffer physical pain until the very end, his life, from the time of his marriage, is a long agony. Gervaise, on the

²³Franko, Boa constrictor, p. 393.

other hand, experiences some satisfaction and contentment, and even attains a state of bliss before beginning her decline. In this almost perfect harmony of rise and decline, Zola probably manifested his full consistency as an artist, while Franko remained more tendencious by adhering to the considerable limits imposed when he donned his "ideological coat of arms."

Franko's work however, was not altogether devoid of artistic talent. Like Zola, who "intuitively realized . . . that bare realism was too constricted a formula,"²⁴ Franko made wide use of symbolism. To begin with, both authors coincidentally use the title of their work as a symbolic element to illustrate their common theme: the influence of environment upon the individual. While the object employed for that purpose differs in both novels, it performs an equivalent function: it becomes the symbol of the "déchéance fatale," the sum-total of all the forces of the environment that contribute to the deterioration and destruction of the individual. Zola's title L'Assommoir (from the verb "assommer," to deal a blow), "was applied by the workers of Paris in their picturesque language to a cheap saloon"²⁵ where they resorted to drinking as the only means of escaping the domestic misery that awaited them, or the inhuman treatment that they experienced at work.

In his customary fashion of personnifying objects and endowing them with superhuman or evil powers, Zola's assommoir becomes similar to a monster with tails and jaws which open as if to swallow up the

²⁴Hemmings, p. 117.

²⁵Grant, Emile Zola, p. 88.

world. The first mention of the distilling apparatus appears early in the novel, and is viewed through Gervaise's eyes, during her first visit with Coupeau to père Colombe's. "L'alambic, avec ses récipients de forme étrange, ses enroulements sans fin de tuyaux, gardait une mine sombre; pas une fumée ne s'échappait; à peine entendait-on un souffle intérieur, un ronflement souterrain; c'était comme une besogne de nuit faite en plein jour, par un travailleur morne, puissant et muet."²⁶ At the sight of this intricate mechanism, Gervaise remains bewildered and helpless, a shudder running through her spine, as if this man-devouring monster was about to swallow her. Her fear however, turns into a premonition when she decides to keep Coupeau company, and indulges in drinking until she feels imprisoned in the monster's copper claws, "pendant que le ruisseau coulait maintenant au travers de son corps."²⁷ As the distilling machine succeeds in taking possession of Gervaise, it gains in symbolic dimension, representing at the same time the overwhelming forces of her surrounding which crush her in her misery and reduce her to a beggar and prostitute, and finally drive her to her grave.

In a similar fashion, Franko makes use of an animate object, the boa constrictor, reproduced in a painting, to symbolize the destructive forces of the environment upon the individual. Franko first introduces the image of the boa in the opening chapter of the novel. In the painting, "the artist had caught the gazelles' flight and that split

²⁶ L'Assommoir, p. 632.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 870.

second in which the snake had raised its head and attacked."²⁸ The boa constrictor is a demoniacal figure, with sinister glee in its eyes, while the captured gazelle's eyes "were full of agony and seemed liquid with tears."²⁹ The author skillfully reveals Herman's character and gives a glimpse of the further development of the plot, when he says that Herman could enjoy sitting for hours looking at the snake. It is significant that the picture hung in Boryslav, and not both in Herman's residence in Drohobych, and also in his office in Boryslav, as it had in the first edition, for it is Boryslav that is the center of the struggle. The reality and symbol are blended with great artistry in that opening chapter, where Herman is shown in the interior of his office, facing the picture on one side, and the window on the other. He has a view on the exterior, where "the scene through the panes was dreary, miserable and repellent; stacks of firewood, mounds of clay, filthy storehouses, and still filthier hovels."³⁰ The working men were black as ravens from the oil and clay, and were dressed in pitiful rags. The author leaves it up to the reader to make the association between the symbolism of the painting and the reality of Boryslav.

The symbolism of the boa constrictor is of a two-fold nature. It is used to represent the tremendous pressure that Herman exerts on the people. "He could see his money conquering and swallowing up countless enemies, ensnaring and milking dry countless others, spread-

²⁸Solasko, Boa Constrictor, p. 201.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

ing endless want, suffering and ruin"31 From this position, Herman was overcome by a malicious feeling of joy and self-contentment, provoked by the stupidity of those who let themselves be trapped so innocently. But then, the position suddenly shifts, as he acquires some frightening feelings of premonition, similar to the fear experienced by Gervaise upon her first encounter with the distilling machine. At the beginning, the effect was rather vague, and was not associated with anything concrete: "He had a vague and superstitious fear of those eyes, and he felt that one day the snake would come to life and bring him something extraordinary--either great joy or great unhappiness."32 Then, as his fortune was constantly increasing and his happiness decreasing, he began to associate his state of mind with the diabolical boa: " . . . his wealth was a hundred-headed monster which was devouring others, but which--who could tell?--might also devour him."33 At such moments, when he glanced at the picture, it seemed that the gazelles had vanished, and that "the coils of the snake glittered like live gold rings, ready to smother its prey, and its eyes, those crafty fiery eyes pierced Herman through and through."34 Later, the snake did come alive once in his dreams. As he was laying motionless, the boa constrictor was looking down at him fixedly from a palm tree. Herman could not tell whether his heart was filled with joy or with fear.

³¹Ibid., p. 222.

³²Ibid., p. 202.

³³Ibid., p. 222.

³⁴Ibid., p. 223.

Suddenly, the snake fell at his side, he could feel the cold touch of its head, and he awoke.

The symbolic images of the distilling machine and the boa constrictor seen through Gervaise's and Herman's eyes appear as an exteriorization of their inner feelings. As the novel progresses, the vision acquires demonic strength, and for both protagonists, it produces the effect of a devouring, ensnaring monster. In addition, the image is used by Zola and Franko for the same end, that is, to represent the pressure of the surrounding and deterministic effect upon the individual. At the time of writing Boa constrictor Franko was under the influence of Zola, as he says in his autobiographical letter to Ohonovskiy.³⁵ It is also obvious from the importance he attaches to the influence of heredity and environment upon the individual. We do not possess the exact evidence that would testify to the fact of whether Franko was directly affected by L'Assommoir while composing his Boa constrictor. He talks about it in his letter of February 1877.³⁶ Therefore, he was acquainted with it while preparing the manuscript for Boa constrictor. The fact remains that he valued the novel very highly, as a depiction of the working people, presented in a true light, neither "idyllic nor romantic."

³⁵ Franko, Tvory, I, pp. 23-24.

³⁶ Ibid., XX, p. 23.

CHAPTER IV

GERMINAL AND BORYSLAV SMIETSIA

When a number of characters from Boa constrictor reappeared the following year in Boryslav smietsia, it became clear that Franko wanted to create a sequence in the fashion of Zola's Rougon-Macquart, whereby the stories would be bound to each other by the recurrence of the characters. In Boryslav smietsia, the main cast are brought back from where they were left off in Boa constrictor: Herman Goldkramer is portrayed in chapter one as the accomplished capitalist, owner of the Boryslav oil mines, one of the wealthiest man in the region. His son, Gotlieb, is the lazy, taciturn, and demonic individual that he was at the end of the first edition of Boa constrictor.

In a physiological manner, Franko develops in Gotlieb the idiotic characteristics inherent from his mother Ryfka, to take on proportions of intense hatred for his father, with a constant desire to kill him. This desire is manifested in the dream scene of Herman in Boa constrictor, where, in the first edition, he awoke to find his son, Gotlieb, in the process of killing him. In the second edition, written twenty-nine years later, Franko somewhat modified Gotlieb's character, by avoiding to portray him as an extreme, clinical case. In Boryslav smietsia, however, he continues to adhere to the characterization of Gotlieb as in the former novel. Therefore, Gotlieb is shown as a savage, inhuman type, taking sadistic pleasure in all forms of cruelty, and plotting several attempts against his father's life. His mother,

Ryfka, has much in common with the son, mainly her hatred for her husband, and her approval of Gotlieb's eccentric behaviour. The abnormality of her own behaviour is uncontestedly revealed when, as a last resort, she advises her son to set fire to Leo's oil possessions in order to force him to win his daughter's hand.

Although the technique of the recurrence of characters may have been adapted from Zola, the method of exposing it differs greatly in both authors, and here again, Franko retains a spark of individuality to his talent. While Franko's characters seem to continue their respective lives from where they left off in the preceeding novel, Zola's form a more intricate pattern. Zola, as was noted earlier, was bound to his genealogical tree, which extended over several generations, and over a literary scope of twenty novels. Franko's pattern of characterization, just as his plot development, was much simpler. Instead of consecrating an entire volume to a new member of the family, Franko merely transposes the characters from one novel to the other, and creates several new personages, not belonging to the family tree.

The antagonist in the second edition of Boa constrictor is in the person of Leo Hammerschlag. He continues to play the role of Herman's competition in Boryslav smietsia. The only relation that he has is his daughter Fani, who becomes involved in a impetuous love affair with Gotlieb. It is interesting to observe, that Fani, unlike Gotlieb, is not endowed with any inherent characteristics, neither is she developed physiologically. She radiates both beauty of body and of soul. When in love, she proceeds in a romantic fashion, being capable of great torment and suffering. On seeing her, Gotlieb becomes completely transformed. He suddenly acquires deep feelings of love,

and begins to act as a romantic hero, in accordance with the wishes of the lady. However, traces of the "bête humaine" remain in him, since, in the end, when all persuasion and concession has failed, he is determined to set fire to Leo's possessions.

This particular way of presenting the characters, that is, of stressing the hereditary traits in some, and neglecting them in others, or, by endowing them with a dual, opposing nature, as in the case of Gotlieb, cannot be interpreted as lacking consistency in method. It should also be attributed to the ever-increasing attraction that Franko held for Zola, which manifested itself in the form of influence in several aspects of Franko's works. This influence extended beyond the Boryslav cycle, throughout many of Franko's writings. One such instance is the novel Lel' and Polel', where the author depicts the lives of the twin brothers, and the determining factors of heredity and environment upon them.

The points of similarity between Boryslav smietsia and Germinal rest in the plot structure rather than in the method of characterization. The pivotal points in both novels center around the organization of the labour force, the strike, and the tragic result of it. The strike leads to the catastrophe in both novels: in Germinal, the flood, and in Boryslav smietsia, the great fire. Because of the unfinished state of the novel, the final act of the fire does not occur. But Franko clearly states that he wanted to "depict the workers' movement of the Boryslav oil-workers which ended in the great fire of Boryslav in the fall of 1873."¹ The fire in Boryslav, just as the flood in the mines

¹Quoted by O. Kornichuk et al. Franko, Tvory, V, p. 473.

of Montsou, is the direct result of the conflict between the strikers and the management, which is the underlying theme of the two novels. The characters in Germinal are no longer the object of attention as they were in L'Assommoir. Germinal is not the story of a life, nor several individuals' lives. "Dans L'Assommoir, j'ai peint la vie du peuple" says Zola, while in Germinal, "je montrerai l'ouvrier dans son rôle social."² The worker and his social rôle were also the subject of Franko's Boryslav smietsia. Both authors therefore, have used the individual as a representative or symbol of his respective social class, the most important being the workers and the management. But the factors that render a rapprochement of the two novels even more plausible are to be found in the society of the workers and their organization.

Before arriving at the conflict between labor and management, both authors present the reader with the necessary material in order to prepare him for the coming drama. However, the technique of exposition differs in both novels for reasons that are rather obvious. The theme of the miners in Germinal is so new, not only in Zola's novels, but in all of French literature, that it was necessary for him to resort to this lengthy prologue in order to develop the desired atmosphere. Therefore, "the function of the first eleven chapters is simply to accumulate the mass of impressions needed for the creation of a setting so far removed from the ordinary as to be almost otherworldly."³ After having familiarized himself with the prologue, "with a

²Quoted by Hemmings, p. 191.

³Hemmings, p. 189.

little imagination," the reader "finds himself breathing the air laden with coal-dust, feeling on his shins and shoulders the sore places rubbed by the jutting pieces of schist, experiencing the nausea of hard physical labour on inadequate rations."⁴

In the novel Boryslav smietsia Franko did not develop a new theme. The life of the workers had been exposed all along in the Boryslav cycle, and it was not necessary to go into long explanations in order to create the atmosphere of dejection and misery at the beginning of the novel. The exposition then consisted in renewing the ties with the previous work, Boa constrictor, so as to achieve the effect of a sequence in the manner of Zola through related characters. Since it is the same family that reappears in Boryslav smietsia, rather than the following generation as we have it in Zola, the plot does not advance in time and space. It remains fixed in the second half of the nineteenth century, in the region of Boryslav. Through the use of the flash-back technique, Franko briefly sums-up the family background of the Goldkramers, following closely the events already narrated in Boa constrictor. At the same time, he introduces the protagonists' faction represented by the mass of workers as in Germinal, and other members of the bourgeois structure, notably Leo Hammerschlag and his daughter Fani.

The conflict between the labor force and the management is manifested by a workers's strike. The workers, starved and undermined, are ready to accept any opportunity that presents itself in order to

⁴Ibid., p. 190.

ameliorate their condition. In this state of anxiety and deliberation, they grow restless as their misery increases. In Germinal and Boryslav smietsia, the workers' dilemma is resolved, at least momentarily, by the arrival of a new character, foreign to their town, namely Etienne Lantier and Benedio Synytsia respectively. There are manifest similarities in the description of the events leading up to their encounter with the workers, and culminating in assuming leadership. Thus, they take on symbolic value, as the representatives of the social milieu which engenders them, retaining all along their individual identity. Hence, by retaining this element of typicalness, Franko and Zola did not completely divorce themselves from the realistic movement which, together with romanticism, characterized their early literary phase.

In describing the journey of Lantier and Benedio, Zola and Franko presented a similar atmosphere of blackness, desolation, and poverty as seen through the protagonists' eyes. In a cold spring night, Lantier arrives at the mining town of Montsou. All around him, he only finds misery and dejection. Nature itself, black and gloomy, foreshadows worse things to come: "N'était-ce pas un cri de famine que roulait le vent de mars, au travers de cette campagne nue? Les rafales s'étaient enragées, elles semblaient apporter la mort du travail, une disette qui tuerait beaucoup d'hommes."⁵ Similarly, Benedio, walking from Drohobych to Boryslav perceives signs of famine in the bareness of the fields and in the hungry and hopeless look of the people: "The

⁵Emile Zola, "Germinal," Vol. V of the Oeuvres complètes, ed. Henri Mitterand (Paris: Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1967), p. 25. Henceforth will be referred to as Germinal.

sun was broiling the earth, which was already baked dry and cracking.

. . . The oats, having come up already, withered for lack of rain and stayed close to the earth."⁶ The people were sad and black as the earth. The same hopelessness reigns in Zola, emphasized by the cold March night, and the drabness of the countryside.

The role that Lantier and Benedio play among the workers grows in importance as time goes on. In his fervour to stand up for the popular cause, Lantier undergoes a period of political education. Knowing merely how to read and write, he thirsts for a more complete knowledge of the situation. He reads whatever comes his way, and embarks on a regular correspondance with Pluchart, the secretary of the Northern Federation of the International. At the same time, he shares his ideas with Rasseneur, a former miner now turned possibilist, and Souvarine, the radical element who advocates reform by violence and revolution. Lantier's popularity with the workers swells up his pride and vanity, until he no longer gives himself entirely to their cause and " . . . becomes coated with a thin layer of culture which is sufficient to open his eyes to the brutishness of the starvelings he champions. His gorge rises against them, and though he will continue to fight their cause, this is only because he has identified it with his own personal aspirations."⁷

As a leader of workers, Benedio appears to be much simpler than

⁶ John Weir, trans., Ivan Franko, Poems and Stories (Toronto: Ukrainiska Knyha, 1956), p. 278. Henceforth will be referred to as Ivan Franko, Poems and Stories.

⁷ Hemmings, p. 199.

Lantier. He follows and advocates his beliefs according to the practical experience that he received as a mason, and not from any literary source. As a bricklayer's helper in Drohobych, the trade his father had before him, " . . . he had grown into the ages-old ways of the craftsmen with their guild system . . . with their endeavours to provide mutual assistance . . . and with their stronger sense of the union of all who worked in one trade."⁸ Before Benedio's arrival, there existed in Boryslav a brotherhood of oil-workers who gathered to protest against the unjust treatment they were receiving at the hands of the employers, as there was no law and order except that of the stronger. The brotherhood denounced these wrongs in a rather primitive fashion, by carving out each injustice on a stick used for that purpose. After the stick was covered with notches, the workers resorted to violence as a means of revenge. Benedio soon realized the fruitless results of such violence. The workers, in the long run, would only succeed in antagonizing the employer, and bring ruin upon themselves. Benedio's method, like Lantier's, was one of slow evolution, of careful planning and total co-operation.

The proposition that Benedio and Lantier offered the workers was essentially the same. They foresaw that some steps were to be taken to cover the workers in case of future crisis. The employers were not concerned with the workers' lot. No provisions had been made to compensate them or their families in the event of physical mishap or death. Moreover, experience had shown that reasoning with the em-

⁸Ivan Franko, Poems and Stories, p. 281.

ployers, as the workers had tried to do with Hennebeau, brought no positive results. Lantier and Benedio knew the consequences of such talks would not be favorable to them. They first engrained into the workers the idea of a general strike. In preparing for the strike, it was necessary to provide for the basic necessities. This was to be accomplished by creating a mutual fund made up of contributions from each worker.

The following step in the rise to leadership of Lantier and Benedio was the general meeting of all the workers. In both novels, it is a clandestine gathering during which the leaders assume complete control over the masses, and win them over to their way of thinking. Franko and Zola chose the open spaces as the site of the meeting. Franko does not give complete description in details of the site as does Zola. Instead, he concentrates his attention on the nature of the meeting, allowing only one sentence for the place of the gathering: "Threatening clouds were gathering on the barren stretch of land that served as the green for Boryslav: that was the oilworkers coming together for their great workingmen's assembly."⁹

In Germinal, Zola makes elaborate use of images to enhance the atmosphere of mystery and secrecy which prevails during the night meeting in the forest. The moon, playing with the branches of the trees, now conceals Lantier as he speaks from the tree trunk, now spotlights him as he raises his hands, and promotes " . . . la future humanité, l'édifice de vérité et de justice" ¹⁰ The presence of women and

⁹Ibid., p. 323.

¹⁰Germinal, p. 231.

children in the cold January night joining in the chorus of angry men accentuates the gravity of the situation. The chapter ends in a forceful crescendo as "l'ouragan de ces trois mille voix emplît le ciel et s'éteignit dans la clarté pure de la lune."¹¹

Not being a master of landscape description, Franko used in moderation the dramatic devices and long descriptions that occur so often in Zola. Thus, in Boryslav smietsia, the meeting is conducted in a business-like manner by Benedio. Like Lantier, he does not possess the gift of flowing style common to a Rasseneur. Yet, like Lantier, he succeeds in swaying the mass of men, whose number--coincidentally or not--approximated that of Germinal. While Lantier partakes in the glory of his popularity, Benedio remains scrupulously fair to the cause of the workers. This is evidenced above all in his humble refusal to accept the secretary's post which Lantier so readily assumed. It is also manifested in his desire to improve the workers' lot, even though he holds a higher post, as a foreman bricklayer in Boryslav. Earning more than the average oilworker, he does not use the extra money for his own pleasure, but contributes to the common treasury.

Since Zola places so much emphasis on action, the strike comes relatively earlier in his novel, that is, after the long exposition which is not itself devoid of action. In Boryslav smietsia, Franko spends much more time in preparation for the strike. The workers are quite ignorant as to the proceedings to adopt. "They didn't know a thing about the great growth of workers' solidarity and union in other

¹¹Ibid., p. 236.

countries, they didn't know that workingmen were banding together and organizing for a great struggle against entrenched wealth and against all injustice to the people, for better wages, for security for their wives and children" ¹² As if to justify himself and Benedio that in his novel, circumstances were preventing the organization of a centralized movement of protest, Franko refers to the developments in the West: "The Drohobych bricklayers also didn't know about the great workers' ideals . . . All these things they didn't know, yet similar conditions and a similar period of history had brought about the vague emergence of those same ideals and efforts in their own midst." ¹³ Thus, Benedio's efforts during his long speech are directed towards persuading the people to strike all at once when the time came. Many workers are not even familiar with the meaning of the term nor its application. At the mention of it, "the oilworkers' jaws dropped with astonishment . . . But . . . how's that? . . . to leave the job" ¹⁴ They agree unanimously after Benedio patiently explains what will be involved, and at the same time, they set up a mutual fund.

As the strike is about to begin, the people, as well as nature, are at a standstill for the unfolding of the long awaited event. "And this took place simultaneously, unanimously, on all the jobs throughout all of Borislav!" ¹⁵ Franko spends very little time, in relation to

¹² Ivan Franko, Poems and Stories, p. 282.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 330.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 341.

Zola, on the description of the strike, and there is a very limited amount of violence. Benedio has a stronger hold on his people than has Lantier, even though he is less overbearing and colorful than his French counterpart. He rejects all form of violence as harmful to both parties, and the people obey him. However, in an episode which parallels that in Zola, when a group of workers from another region arrive at the request of the management, there is a struggle between these workers and the strikers. In Boryslav smietsia, it takes place on the outskirts of the city, and the unwelcome guests are driven out, while in Germinal, the conflict is engaged between the military and the strikers, when the Belgian miners are already in the pits. The Boryslav clash was not as bloody as the one at Requillart. There were no casualties, only a few injuries of no serious consequence. The struggle is also less effective than in Zola, as it is retold by a tremulous Leo, at a meeting of the management, and produces a comical effect. In Germinal, the conflict ends tragically, as Maheu, the model father and the worker is shot to death.

While the strike does not go by without the outbreak of rioting and violence in Boryslav smietsia, it seems to predominate in Germinal. It is engendered in the masses as well as among individuals. The masses are more destructive, as they get out of control, and derive more pleasure with the increase of damage that they inflict. Parts V and VI are devoted almost entirely to violence inflicted by an angry mob as they march together to the pit Jean-Bart after the forest meeting. To prevent the other group of anti-strikers from working, they cut the cables and destroy the heavy machinery. In their common cry for justice, they grow bolder all the time, until Lantier can no longer

control them. After Jean-Bart, they continue their march from pit to pit, singing the Marseillaise and clamoring for bread. They come to a halt in front of Hennebeau's home, but their anger is not appeased. Receiving no response from Hennebeau, the women attack Cécile Grégoire, daughter of the idle Montsou shareholder. They release her only to shift their wrath upon Maigret the grocer. They pursue him until he kills himself falling from the roof, and then rejoice in mutilating his body. In the following part, we witness the clash between the strikers and the soldiers, as mentioned above, where Maheu is not the sole victim, but one of fourteen dead and twenty-five injured. There is no end to violence in Germinal, as the starving mob is ready to kill and be killed, and not suffer a slow, agonizing death.

In both novels, the conclusion of the strike, just as the beginning of it, is achieved in a similar manner. In both cases, the workers, after a period of endurance and deprivation, ironically return to work for lower wages than they were earning before the strike. In Germinal, the strikers are almost made to starve to death. In fact, Zola depicts one instance of starvation, the death of Alzire, Maheu's crippled daughter. As the strikers go back one after the other, even the Maheude, Maheu's wife, who was already over the age of acceptance, goes back to the pit to replace her husband, who had been killed in the clash at Requillart.

At this point, when all seems hopelessly lost and futile, the radical element represented by Souvarine intervenes in favor--so he believes--of the miners. In the discussions that Lantier was holding with him and the miners, Souvarine rejected all possible solutions by evolution. He favored the revolutionary activities that made him an

exile from Russia. For, he believed that only by an overthrow of the old order a new order can be build, based on justice and brotherhood of men. His chance comes in the end, when all efforts of negotiations and threats have failed. His sabotage of the Voreux mine ends in disaster as fourteen miners are trapped and perish in the great flood. Among the dead is Catherine Maheu, who dies in Lantier's arms after nine days of struggle for survival, in one of the greatest dramatic scenes of the novel.

Similarly, in Boryslav smietsia, the strike ends in utter defeat for the workers who are forced to accept lower wages. At the same time, it comes as an anti-climax for Herman's victory, who agrees to give in to the strikers' demands. In allowing the management to contribute to the treasury, the workers disclosed its location. During the night, the funds were stolen, and the workers found themselves without resources to continue their struggle. Beaten and humiliated, they return to work the following morning. After rejoicing at their short lived victory, they have now become the laughing stock of Boryslav.

The proper name "Boryslav" is ambiguous in as far as it can be applied to a person besides designating the geographic location of the town. By endowing it with a human characteristic, that of laughing, the title suggests that Boryslav is much more than a mere location. In its singular usage, with the collective overtones of all that make up the town, it takes on the appearance of a monster, of a grotesque yet invisible phenomenon, a damned place of no return. It recalls the remote, inaccessible deity, in Germinal, the master of the mines, who demanded human sacrifices to be immolated in its voracious pits. The oldest miner in the Maheu generation, Bonnemort, speaking of it to

Lantier, " . . . désignait dans l'ombre un point vague, un lieu ignoré et reculé Sa voix avait pris une sorte de peur religieuse, c'était comme s'il eut parlé d'un tabernacle inaccessible, ou se cachait le dieu repu et accroupi, auquel ils donnaient tous leur chair, et qu'ils n'avaient jamais vu."¹⁶

When the oilworkers have capitulated in their struggle against the evil forces of management, the radical faction led by the brothers Bassarab stepped in to act. While Souvarine was alone in his belief of wiping out the corrupt system to rebuild a just one, the brothers Bassarab, in a primitive fashion of their own, have gathered a group of followers, willing to carry out their order of destruction. Only after Benedio's evolutionary methods have failed, did they again assume the leadership. Like wounded beasts after a battle, everyone was ready for revenge more than ever. The decision was a terrible one: total destruction of oilwells by fire. This decision was adopted simultaneously by Gotlieb, upon his mother's advice. The novel remained ambiguous in its unfinished state. However, as in Germinal, where hope could be detected in the atmosphere, on the fields, where new life was "germinating", so in Boryslav smietsia the determination of the people to succeed was sufficient to fill them with renewed zeal to fight for a better life ahead.

Many other points of similarity can be found in Boryslav smietsia and in Germinal in the stylistic devices and method of description adopted by both authors. There are still traces of romanti-

¹⁶Germinal, p. 30.

cism left in Zola and Franko, very often in the evocation of natural phenomena which foreshadow a certain situation. It also exists in the love scenes of both novels, especially at the end of Germinal, in which love and death are interwoven. Although Franko restricts his flow of descriptive passages and imagery, he makes use of symbolism in this novel, just as he did in Boa constrictor. Thus, in the eyes of workers, Boryslav is conceived in a similar light as the Voreux, a fearful, incomprehensible enigma, against which they are powerless, and from which it is best to stay away. Moreover, the parallel plot structure of the two novels--beginning with the organization of the strike, its unfolding and unhappy end, the radical methods adapted as a result of its failure, and the climactic destruction--is completely sufficient to demonstrate the great resemblance that exists between Boryslav smietsia and Germinal.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 25.

CHAPTER V

THE REVISED "RIPNYK"

Aside from Franko's two major novels of the Boryslav cycle analyzed in the previous chapters, we cannot overlook the short story "Ripnyk" which contains independent motifs obviously borrowed from Zola. These borrowings stand out in the second edition of the short story, which underwent great changes, following the fate of Boa constrictor. In the first edition of 1877, "Ripnyk" tells the story of a young man, Ivan Pivtorak, who forsakes his father's land to go earn an easier living in Boryslav. There, he abandons Fruzia, the girl who has followed him, and who is bearing his child. He leads a life of carefree pleasure and debauchery, often in the company of the healthy looking Hanka. Upon discovering the dead Fruzia with the newborn child in her arms, Ivan realizes that like the other oilworkers, he has fallen prey to the entrepreneurs' greed, and that life in Boryslav offers nothing but corruption and degeneration. He manages to salvage enough money to return to his home and cultivate the land.

The story is very simple; there is not much plot development. "Ripnyk" figures among the series of the first Boryslav tales where the author underlines the importance of the small landowner, and the tragic consequences that ensue if he abandons the land for better prospects in the cities. In many cases, the worker lost his land by gambling away the money, or by drinking it even before he had earned it, in establishments where the innkeeper often co-operated with the employer in suc-

ceeding to strip the poor worker of his last possessions. The oil-worker or ripnyk, if he was lucky to escape from death in accidents in the pits, or if he did not end his days by drinking, lost out in the end in any case, being the victim of circumstances, too weak materially and morally to struggle against his oppressors, the Herman Goldkramers of Boryslav.

The second edition of 1899 acquires a more complex intrigue as Franko develops the characters and inserts several scenes of action absent from the first edition. The Fruzia-Ivan relationship retains its original character, that is, Fruzia is truly in love with Ivan, who does nothing to reciprocate this love. Hanka, who was just another girl in Ivan's life in the earlier edition, is made to appear much more aggressive. She stands in Fruzia's way and boasts of sharing Ivan with her. The ménage à trois is an old motif in literature, not necessarily borrowed from Zola's Thérèse Raquin. But it is different than that of the drowning scene and the quarreling episode, as will be demonstrated.

In Zola, Camille and Thérèse are already tied by marriage bonds before the intrusion of the third party, Camille's friend Laurent. Thérèse falls passionately in love with Laurent, and in their violent passion for one another, they plot the murder of Camille. Both of them take part in the execution of the plan, and succeed in drowning Camille during a boating trip on the Seine.

Although the drowning scene in "Ripnyk" differs in its execution, it is as cold-blooded as in Thérèse Raquin. It is the intruder alone, Hanka who, without Ivan's knowledge or suspicion, drowns Fruzia in an abandoned oilwell, after the latter has succumbed to a fainting

spell. True, the murder was not plotted beforehand; the opportunity presented itself during one of the violent disputes between the two women, as they were walking in the streets of Boryslav. But the feelings of hate that possessed them could not but have lead to some tragic end, where Fruzia would probably have been at a disadvantage, because of her gentle disposition and kind nature on the one hand, and her sickly physical condition on the other. Hanka was a strongly built woman, with full, rosy cheeks, and no scruples to top it all. The clash between the two women, one in total despair and the other spiteful and arrogant, is inevitable, and so is the death of one, in this cursed Boryslav.

The aftermath of the drowning scenes also parallel each other as far as the culprits' reaction to it is concerned. The murderers, in both cases, escape physical punishment through careful planning of the murder, making it seem as though it was an accident. But morally, they experience a series of horrible nightmares, being constantly haunted by the corpse of the deceased. It is at night that the fears and hallucination begin. Hanka, who had hoped to marry Ivan by doing away with Fruzia, can only coax him with spirits and the comfort of a warm featherbed to stay the night with her. All through the night he hears her screaming as one possessed. A feeling of discomfort is passed on to him. Whenever he inquires about Fruzia, "he felt sorrowful and somewhat uneasy as if he had been guilty of some misdeed."¹ He begins to feel disgust for Hanka, and abandons her altogether. Her

¹Ivan Franko, "Ripnyk," Vol. 1 of Ivan Franko, tvory v dvadtsiaty tomakh (Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstro khudozhnoi literatury, 1955), p. 94.

state of health deteriorates, her rosy cheeks lose their color, and she becomes thin. She sees the corpse of the drowned Fruzia come towards her and seize her with a hand "decayed to the bone, but holding on as if with pincers."² No longer able to tolerate such torment, she asks the old fortune teller Oryna to cast the spell away. However, Oryna recognizes that Hanka suffers from graver torment than just a spell. Pushed to the extremes, Hanka confesses her crime and finds peace of mind. She ends her days in prison, while awaiting her trial.

The motives that pushed the murder to be committed derive from the characters' passion, from their wish to possess each other without the interference of the third party. Although Ivan was not an accomplice, nor did he have any future plans with Hanka, his tone of indifference and neglect for the woman whom he had wronged makes him feel morally guilty. In Thérèse Raquin, both lovers share the guilt. Their agony only augments after their marriage, when they feel the corpse of the deceased between them in their bed, or by being reminded of Camille through various physical manifestations, such as the scar on Laurent's neck or the cat in their room, accomplice of their early passions.

The other motif of interest that Franko has added in the second edition of "Ripnyk" is the dispute between the two women, Hanka and Fruzia, for the same lover, Ivan. It is no longer in Thérèse Raquin that this motif can be found, but it appears in the opening chapter of L'Assommoir where it sets the action in motion, "defines Gervaise's

²Ibid., p. 106.

character and introduces the motif of her struggle for survival."³

Gervaise's rival, Virginie, resembles Hanka in the way of constantly teasing the weaker one in front of other workers about her lover's desertion. Fruzia and Gervaise have the common misfortune of having children by their lover. Both are hard working women, trying to earn an honest living in order to feed the children and keep from starving themselves.

The dispute between the women is at first a verbal one, each shouting obscenities at the other, more and more colorful all the time, amid a cruel audience, who seeks some vulgar pleasure. In the laundry shop, Gervaise learns that Lantier has forsaken her and the children when all the money was spent. Gervaise's sorrow is accentuated by the mockeries of the tall Virginie, with whose sister Lantier has spent the night. No longer being able to contain her anger, Gervaise hurls a pail of water at Virginie, and the fight with fists is thus engaged. The women jump upon each other, each seizing a board. "Alors, mises en train, elles se tapèrent comme les laveuses tapent leur linge, rudement, en cadence. Quand elles se touchaient, le coup s'amortissait, on aurait dit une claque dans un baquet d'eau."⁴ Similarly, as the dispute between Fruzia and Hanka progresses in the street, "Fruzia threw herself upon Hanka and clutching the braids, began to pull on them and knock her about. Hanka . . . dropped the yoke, and with her free hand dealt such a heavy blow to Fruzia's chest that the latter was immedi-

³Haskell M. Block, Naturalistic Triptych (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 20.

⁴L'Assommoir, p. 621.

ately swept off her feet and let go of her braids."⁵ The reaction of the onlookers in L'Assommoir and in "Ripnyk" is equally distasteful. They do not interfere to separate the feuding women, but instead, cheer them on by taking sides as does an audience during a football match.

By comparing the two versions of "Ripnyk" separated by twenty-two years, it becomes clear that Franko borrowed the independent motifs of drowning and the throwing of water in the fighting scene from Zola. Not only is it evident from the insertion of the two scenes absent from the first edition, but also in the different manner of ending the revised tale. The fatal accident that mysteriously occurred to Ivan Pivtorak in the oil pit immediately preceeding his departure from Boryslav, reappears in the first edition of Boa constrictor and then is recalled in Boryslav smietsia, when old Matii re-opens the investigation of the murder in the hope of avenging Pivtorak's widow. Ivan Pivtorak's death was necessary to establish a link between this short-story and the other two novels of Boryslav.

While thus strengthening the bonds that united him to Zola, Franko at the same time remained true to his principles of social reform, for Ivan's death was also a lesson and a warning to landowners and all those who were seeking an El dorado in the wealth and filth of Boryslav. The revised edition of "Ripnyk" further confirms the assertion that Franko was not departing from Zola's method. On the contrary, the addition of the drowning and quarreling motifs, the elaboration of the characters, especially Hanka's, and the death of Pivtorak, show Franko's ever-increasing interest in Zola.

⁵"Ripnyk," p. 83.

CONCLUSION

In his theoretical writings, critical articles, and various correspondance, Franko refrained from defining his literary work as belonging to any modernistic trend or to any other category of "isms" that critics were inclined to subject him. Franko was not concerned to figure among the literary public of the avant-garde. He only hoped that the public at large would heed the word of a social reformer advocating justice and truth for all men, and upgrading the level of his national literature. The sense of the real and the feeling of life around him was so strong in Franko that he could not divorce reality from art. Even in the field of poetry, he believed that the basic experience was that given by life itself, undulterated by mythical illusions. In discussing Shakespeare's artistic manipulation of Anthony and Cleopatra, Franko expresses this opinion when he says that "from nothing even the greatest genius will create nothing. Such genial creation as we see in Cleopatra are a proof not only of a great fantasy and dramatic strength of the author, but also of the fact that he must have accumulated a wide range of impressions, experiences, joys and tribulations, hopes and enchanting moments, until such a creation could emanate from them as from the foam of the sea."¹

Consequently, Franko was always of the idea that literature

¹Franko, Tvory, XVIII, p. 378.

and life were closely knit together in the sense that reality was a prerequisite for art. Without further ado, Franko pronounced the futility of art for art's sake or even the manner of dedication to form practised by Flaubert. In Zola, he found the combination of characteristics that make the imaginative artist and the social reformer co-exist hand in hand, and this quality he praised highly when others attacked him expressly for that same reason. Franko remarked that "by giving life to nature, by personifying and individualizing inanimate objects and stressing their influence on man, it is the only way of catching the thin threads which unconsciously tie his thoughts, feelings and habits with--what seems at first--inanimate environment."²

Zola's talent of representing man in relation to his natural environment was derived from the need to proclaim the truth which had hitherto been concealed by soft shades of colouring. In depicting the sordid side of life, Zola became the champion of the oppressed. Franko perceived this attribute in Zola even before the French author had explicitly stated his social purpose in such works as L'Assommoir or even more, in Germinal. Franko's social purpose coincided with and surpassed that of Zola in his zeal to devote himself ideally to the selfless cause of mankind. His literature was to be "toiling in the field of man's progress."³ Its tendency and method, stated Franko, should be scientific.⁴

²Ibid., p. 84.

³Ibid., XVI, p. 13.

⁴Ibid.

Nevertheless, in his resorting to the scientific method of observation and documentation, Franko was not in the danger of relinquishing his subjectivity and individuality as an author. The scientific approach was perhaps the most appropriate way in which he could depict the truth unobstructively. For Franko was conditioned by his own environment of his father's blacksmith's shop to observe and listen to many accounts of town life of Western Ukraine. Later, he supplied this information with further documentation, for he was an avid observer and collector of popular beliefs and songs, which reflected everyday life.

The initial attraction for Zola that Franko experienced as early as 1877 stemmed from the fact that Zola was preoccupied with the same problem that concerned Franko: the fate of the common people and the workers. The high degree of objectivity which characterized Zola's portrayal of the downtrodden could not go by without provoking a stir in society. Franko, whose seriousness of purpose compelled him to resort to methods which would create an impression upon the reader, could not remain untouched by Zola's theoretical explanations.

Upon examination of Franko's Boryslav cycle to which this study is limited, there arises the proof that Franko's interest in Zola manifested itself not only in the form of borrowings of certain elements, but also in the adoption of principles stated by Zola in his theoretical works. In the field of subject matter, the affinities that exist in plot structure of the works analyzed are so striking that any denial of Zola's increasing significance in Franko's works would be a gross underestimation. Furthermore, the comparison of

the revised editions show that in his later life, Franko was more than ever accepting the ideas and methods of Zola.

In his efforts to present an objective picture of life, Franko absorbed Zola's theories to a considerable extent. In his Boryslav cycle, Franko's insistence upon the deterministic forces of environment and heredity in the life of his characters is far from decreasing in importance as the cycle proceeds. Only in his psychological treatment of the characters, the physiological aspects stressed by Zola occur in moderation in the works examined.

While incorporating Zola's principles into his art, Franko did not depart from his originality as an artist, nor did he abandon the social role that he took on at the beginning of his literary career. In speaking of the method of construction of his Boryslav cycle, Kobyletskii affirms that "Franko can not be viewed only as a cold, objective observer. In these tales, one can see more of Franko himself, the champion of mankind, who does not cover up his sympathies or antipathies in the struggle which sometimes conceals the artist in him."⁵ Franko's application of Zola's method to his character depiction and psychological motivations, and even the borrowing of motifs from Zola's subject-matter convinces us of his unequivocal position as a follower of the naturalist tendency in literature. Franko's recourse to naturalism as a method also points to the fact that this movement was a productive one in the history of literature.

⁵Iurii Kobyletskii, Tvorchist' Ivana Franka (Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo khudozhnoi literatury, 1956), p. 64.

⁶Franko, Tvory, XVIII, p. 84.

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APPENDIX

Frako's Translations of Zola

- 1876: "Povín" (Les Quatre journées de Jean Gourdon), published in Dnistrianka, pp. 99-128.
- 1878: "Pryroda a tserkov" (The Nature and the Church), fragment from La Faute de L'abbé Mouret. Hromadskyi druh, No. 2, pp. 151-158.
- 1879: Dovbnia (L'Assommoir) in collaboration with Ol'ha Roshkevych. Foreword by Ivan Franko. Published in Dribna biblioteka.
- 1885: "Napad na mlyn" (L'Attaque du moulin) in Z chuzhykh zel'nykiv, pp. 71-102.
- 1897: "Pontifex maximus," fragment from Rome. Zhyttie i slovo, 6, No. 3, pp. 205-214; Nos. 5-6, pp. 400-413.
- 1898: "Zlochynets' sal'va" (The villain Salva), fragment from Paris. Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk, 3, No. 7, pp. 102-113; Nos. 8-9, pp. 294-322; 4, No. 10, pp. 101-113.
- 1898: "Zhaba" (The Frog), fragment from Paris. Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk, 2, No. 6, pp. 354-361.
- 1900: "Mishchanyn i selianyn" (The Townsman and the Country Man), fragment from Fécondité. Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk, 9, No. 1, pp. 90-101.
- 1902: "Pravda" (The Truth), fragment from Vérité. Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk, 20, No. 11, pp. 154-174; No. 12, pp. 246-256.
- 1904: Germinal, trans. O. Pashkevych in collaboration with Ivan Franko. Foreword by Franko. Published by Ukrains'ko-rus'ka vydavnycha spilka.

Franko's Articles on Zola

- 1877: "L'Assommoir." Druh, Nos. 3-4 (March 23), pp. 54-55. In this first article on Zola, Franko points out the importance of the Rougon-Macquart in literature. He briefly speaks on Zola's method and the structure of his novels.
- 1878: "Emil Zola i jego utwory" (Emile Zola and His Works). Tydzień, No. 44 (June 30), pp. 123-24. Franko examines the new literary movement in France in relation to the first eight novels of the Rougon-Macquart.
- 1879: "Dovbnia" (L'Assommoir). Pravda, No. 7, pp. 457-60. Franko's foreword to the Ukrainian translation of L'Assommoir. Franko's critical attitude toward experimentalism in this novel does not obscure his appreciation of Zola's creative talent.
- 1881: "Emil Zolia: Zhyttiepys" (Biography of Emile Zola). Svit, No. 2 (February 10), pp. 34-36. Short biography of Zola and a summary of the first nine novels of the Rougon-Macquart. He stresses the importance of Thérèse Raquin in Zola's work.
- 1891: "Potega ziemi w powieści współczesnej" (The Power of the Land in the Contemporary Novel). Myśl, No. 10 (October 1), pp. 6-8; No. 11 (October 15), pp. 4-6; No. 12 (November 1), pp. 5-7; No. 13 (November 15), pp. 2-3. Franko discusses the evolution of the novel. He makes a brief characterization of Zola's La Terre and compares it with Hlib Uspenskyi's works.
- 1893: "Zola o bezimienności w prasie" (Zola's Anonymity in the Press). Kurjer Lwowski, No. 276 (September 26), p. 3; No. 272 (October 1), p. 7. Franko discusses Zola's London lectures and his letter "J'Accuse."
- 1898: "Emil' Zolia ioho zhyttia i pysannia" (Zola's Life and Works). Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk, 4, No. 10, pp. 35-68. Franko examines Zola's involvement in the Dreyfus Affair. He demonstrates the unity between his political life and his literary career.
- 1898: "Pershi rozdil' 'Paryzha' E. Zolia. Holos Zolia v spravi Dreifusa" (The First Chapters of Zola's 'Paris.' The Voice of Zola in the Dreyfus Affair). Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk, No. 2, pp. 113-133. Franko relates the unfolding of the Dreyfus trial and Zola's importance in it.

- 1900: "Nova povist' E. Zolia 'Fécondité'" (Zola's New Work 'Fécondité'). Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk, 9, No. 1, pp. 54-58. Franko criticizes the didacticism of the work which prevents the application of the objective approach to the naturalistic novel.

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